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THE MISCHIEF OF A POLICE CHIEF

A FRAGMENT OF DARKEST RUSSIA IN THE LAST QUARTER OF THE PAST CENTURY

BY

MARK REIN

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THE MISCHIEF OF A POLICE CHIEF.

I.

THE TEMPLE COURTYARD WATCHMAN AND THE LITTLE VILKOMIRER.

Again I see Vilna, the Vilna of former years. Like a submerged city rising out of the depths of the sea, it rises out of the depths of my soul to my mental eye.

Again I see the long double Temple courtyard of Vilna with its strange, tragic-comic life.

There they are again, the poor women and girls offering in the courtyard their warm cakes for sale; and their mournful and imploring chant of "Hot, seething! hot, seething!" with which they simultaneously praise their warm goods and bewail their cold lives, are falling again heart-rendingly upon my ear.

There they are again, the careworn women standing with their hot peas and every now and then politely taking the hats — the covers — off their stupid pots, which cannot themselves realize the importance of a buyer, in order to diffuse the odor

of the edible and thus attract the buyer by the nose as the chanting cake-sellers do him by the ears.

There they are again, the poor starved-looking peddlers standing sadly with their baskets and turning plaintive looks toward the houses of God:

"Lord of the universe, why hast thou given me so many toothpicks [for sale], which do not bring me in one bite of meat; so much soap, which does not cleanse me of my debts; so many amulets [for babies], which do not protect me against poverty; so many calendars, which do not show me a single lucky day?"

There, at the entrance to the synagogue situated opposite the Temple, she is again, the blooming but crippled young beggar woman holding out her healthy and graceful hand for alms and piercing the feeling hearts of the pious passers-by with her crutches. And around her, with simulated physical blemishes and, consequently, with real moral ones, there are again the mendicants besieging that entrance and foolishly choosing to beg man there for a few paltry kopecks instead of begging God a few steps farther, inside the synagogue, for something more substantial.

Again I see the holy houses of study and prayer adjacent to the Temple, with their countless young and old Talmud students, singing and swaying over their much-used folios; with their devout and good-hearted worshipers, supplicating God and being

supplicated at the same time by needy coreligionists.

Again I am gazing at the ancient, venerable Temple, with its awe-inspiring silence between Sabbath and Sabbath and with its long and narrow daily opened vestibule, which, in sharp contrast with the Temple proper, is filled till midnight with an intensely religious life, produced by ever coming and going worshipers and overbrimming into the courtyard in the fervent amens of the refreshment-venders.

Again I am contemplating the little lion emitting, at the entrance to the Temple, a stream of water, at the inexhaustible source of which I, passing Vilna when a child, greatly wondered, not yet knowing that so many floods of tears had been shed near the little lion—tears, which, alas, had flowed downward instead of upward to be put into God's capacious tear-bottle. . . .

Again, youthful and observing, I am wandering about through the bustle of the yard. Again I am sitting at the little window above the Claus—a synagogue near the Temple—and, overlooking the Temple courtyard, I am wondering at its remarkable life, so full of the pathetic and of the comic, of body-crushing misery and of soul-invigorating devoutness, of the thick darkness of Russia and of the brilliant light of the Torah, of brutal Czardom and of Divine Presence.

. . . . . .

THE MISCHIEF OF A POLICE CHIEF

The recollection of a bitter and here narrated experience of mine with the Russian police years ago, has conjured up before me Vilna and its most interesting spot, the Temple courtyard.

I underwent that experience at the beginning of one of the winters of the last quarter of the past century. I was living then in one of the little rooms situated above the Claus mentioned before. One December evening, standing in the Claus portico, which led into the rear part of the courtyard, I was accosted by Reb Shlome, the elderly, witty, and theologically learned sexton of the Claus, with whom, as a neighbor, I was on friendly terms.

"I've heard," he said, "that you're looking for a position as bookkeeper. Come in for a while; I'll give you a letter of recommendation."

" A position !" I thought joyfully and followed him into his home.

It consisted of one room, the door and the single window of which opened into the dim portico. It served Reb Shlome also for a business place—an obscure little restaurant and tea-house, which, always dimly lighted, were also obscure in the primary signification of the word. About the cooking-stove, where Yente, the sexton's wife, used to empty large soup pots into plates, there was special obscurity, which sometimes half hid her charitably from criticism. For some of her patrons, as obscure as the little restaurant, were not infrequently surprised to

find the thick soup, when their spoons had reached the bottom of the deep plates, all of a sudden cold, which astonishing change of temperature was due to the fact that, in the dimness, she had poured the hot soup for one patron on top of the cooled-off leavings of another.

On a table was burning a tallow-candle, the only small light the sexton could bring over into his poor home from his other place of activity, the Claus, so amply illumined by the light of the Torah, the sun, gas, and the large-sized memorial candles. Originally intended to light the God-fearing worshipers and the students in the Claus, the candle now accommodated a robust and crafty-looking young Pole in a soldier's cast-off coat and an old plush-cap. He was the watchman of the Temple courtyard, which, as was the case with all Russian houses in the care of their janitors, was watched by him less for its own safety than for the safeguarding of the police regulations, especially of those concerning the forbidden harboring of passportless people. He had drunk himself red with tea, and his face was covered with perspiration. Scarcely had he caught sight of me, when he left his seat, advanced toward me, put his arms akimbo, drew himself up to his full height, assumed the air of a severe police inspector, and asked me:

"Where are you from, Reb Jew?"

He said this in Yiddish, which, despite his non-

Jewish descent, he mastered as well as he did the Jewish national Sabbath dishes, which he used to devour in the Temple courtyard out of the pots of kind-hearted Jewesses.

"Leave him alone, Ivan," called Reb Shlome in Polish, looking about for an inkstand; "I have to speak to him."

The stern watchman, however, would by no means leave hold of me and continued, without waiting for my answer, at a stretch:

"Are you from Mintzk, Pintzk, Hotzeplotz? Is your name Abraham, David, Itzig, Pitzig? Have you a passport? Are you registered? Is it long since—"

"Keep quiet, you indecent fellow!" broke in Yente while her husband was writing something upon a slip of paper. "This gentleman is living above the Claus with Reb Aaron, the teacher; he has a passport, and my husband himself has registered him."

These words had their effect; Ivan left me silently and resumed his seat. He had evidently mistaken me for one of the young Talmud students of the courtyard, against whom he nourished a grudge because of their failure to show him enough respect when he put out the candles and heated the stoves in the synagogues on the Sabbath. I was, however, not yet rid of him. He soon put on a polite face and addressed me again, this time in Russian.

"Do you know, sir," he said, "that, at the order of the new chief of police, a very severe inspection is to take place these days? They'll rummage the whole courtyard, especially the rooms above the Claus, where many passportless persons are said to stay. Everybody will be torn out of his sleep and thoroughly inspected.—"Yet," he added, after a pause, smirkingly, and put a piece of sugar, which he had left from his tea, into his mouth, as if to lend sweetness to his words; "yet, if you wish, sir, I can arrange things so that your night-rest wouldn't be in the least disturbed. I'm on very good terms with the policemen, who trust my word; and when I tell them that everything's all right with Reb Aaron, the teacher, his rooms remain unvisited and unmolested, and you can quietly sleep into broad day."

Naturally I gave his words but limited credence. I could easily believe his statement regarding the excessive severity of the inspection to come off, as worse things could be expected from the new police chief, who was the terror of Vilna; I also believed him that he was in favor with the police, to whom he must doubtless have been of great assistance during the previous inspections in the Temple courtyard; but I was reluctant to believe him that his word could save my room from being raided. I am sure that he had lied in order to get from me a tenkepeck piece *na vodku*—for brandy—. Considering, however, that his lies might lead him to

truth—to the truthfulness of a drunken man, and that, besides, he was the watchman of the place I was living in, I put up with his bluff and gave him, in spite of Yente's furtive wink not to do so, the desired coin. On receiving it, he promised me a restful night and left the restaurant.

"Now you can go," said Reb Shlome to me, handing me a folded paper. "Take this recommendation to Reb Johanan, the locksmith; he'll recommend you to his son, who has a hardware store in Meat Street, for which he needs a bookkeeper. You must see Reb Johanan this evening, that he may talk the matter over with his son, who usually visits him in the evening. He is living in the narrow alley leading into Meat Street, on the same floor where Chevrah-Torah [a synagogue containing a *yeshivah* or rabbinic college] is situated. There is a little hosiery store there, opposite which you'll see the stairs leading up to his home. Going there," the sexton added, producing a letter, "you'll please step into Remailes Claus [a Talmud school] and give this letter to the boy from Keidani, who receives his mail here, and who's very anxious to hear from his parents. You know where Remailes Claus is?"

"I'm no stranger here any longer," I replied, thanked Reb Shlome for his favor, and was about to depart when his wife detained me.

"Why have you given the *Goy* [a non-Jew] money?" she reproached me. "He has more good

luck than he deserves; he has overfilled himself with our tea free of charge."

"Free of charge!" I echoed in astonishment; "does he always get his tea here for nothing?"

"He always promises to pay, but does it seldom; in this way he gets also his meals here. But to-day he had not even to promise to pay, for I have offered him the tea gratis. What is to be done with a *Goy?* He can notify the police that the Vilkomir boy is staying with us without a passport."

"What Vilkomir boy?"

"You've not seen him?" interposed Reb Shlome wonderingly. "He has been with us since last Monday.—Oh, yes, you have not been here for some time. There he is sleeping, in the corner. Last week he ran away from his home with the intention of apprenticing himself here to some handicraftsman. Who had put this idea into his head, I don't know; he says he had himself realized that there was no future for him in the study of the Talmud, which had afforded his father, who had occupied himself with it until his marriage, no better career than that of a poverty-stricken *melammed* [a Bible and Talmud teacher]. In this he may be right; I know it from personal experience. I wish the love for education and the great hardships a young apprentice undergoes in the house of his employer hadn't prevented my father—peace be with him!—from teaching me a trade. But to undertake such a thing without the

consent of his parents is for a young boy like him —he's not yet ten years old—very reprehensible.

"Last week, on arriving here, he went to several mechanics and told them about his decision. Without papers from his home town, of the necessity of which in a strange city he had had no idea before, he could, of course, obtain no apprenticeship. He couldn't even find shelter, owing to the new police master's [police chief's] strict orders imposing very heavy fines upon those lodging passportless people. Strange, dejected, and hungry, he was walking about in the streets and in the Temple courtyard until he had the good fortune of meeting Reb Johanan, the locksmith, who installed him in Chevrah-Torah. Here the students, poor as they're themselves, supported him in the hope of rewinning him—he has a fine head—for the Talmud studies.

"But he soon fell out with the students, openly declaring the uselessness to a career of those studies, left Chevra-Torah, and was again knocking about shelterlessly, when my wife, having learned of his condition from some students patronizing our restaurant, admitted him into our home. And now we've no end of trouble from him! The whole night he doesn't stop lamenting, not from homesickness but from fear of police raids. It's scarcely nightfall when he begins to imagine the police raid the courtyard, rush into our home, drag him to the police station, and he is deported on foot by étape

to Vilkomir. His fear is the greater because he has heard from the Chevrah-Torah students, some of whom have expired passports or none at all, and who're talking the whole day of nothing but the police, so many terrible things about the raids."

"Are the raids this winter," I asked Reb Shlome, "really of a severer nature than they were last winter?"

"Of course, they are," was the answer. "Their mainspring is the new police master, whose ambition it is to make things at any cost go orderly in Vilna. The fact that things do not go here orderly in the cold winter nights when people are dragged out of their beds to the police stations because they have not yet received their new passports, is of no account to him. As long as he creates order, he doesn't care a straw for anybody's comfort, rest, and livelihood. He would gladly kill a turbulent drunkard to make him look orderly in his coffin. He makes his raids in any place of the city and its suburbs and at any time of the night, and often surprises even his subordinates to see to the strict performance of their duties. He's always on the move; you can see him now here, now there in his runabout, accompanied by a devil-like Cossack with a knout. They say he has hardly ever a wink of sleep."

"What a pity he sleeps so little!" I remarked; "dreamland stands so greatly in need of such an or-

der-bringing man as he is; for where's there a greater topsy-turvy than that which reigns in the realm of dreams?"

"Dreamland must be now flooded with the Vilkomirer's tears," said the sexton compassionately. "Look there, he's crying in his sleep. Last Tuesday I wrote to his father about him. I really don't know what to do with him at this severe winter time. If the Temple courtyard is raided, they'll not send him home by étape; but I shall surely have to pay a considerable fine."

Here Reb Shlome paused. Repressed sobs, proceeding from the dark background of the restaurant, had made themselves heard. The little boy had not been sleeping as we had believed; he had been listening to his own sad story.

"You're wailing again, Vilkomirer!" called the sexton, divided between anger and pity; "you're trembling again before the police."

With this, he took the candle from the table and, followed by his wife and me, stepped up to the lamenter. The poor boy, huddled up on a small bench near the stove, his face haggard and tear-stained, and his little coat ragged, presented a heart-rending sight.

"I'm not—afraid—of the police—," replied he in a voice broken by renewed sobs, to which he now gave rein; "let them—drag me—; but the fine—the new—police master—"

"Don't be foolish, Vilkomirer," said Yente soothingly; "it'll hardly come to it. Tonight you've nothing to fear, for there'll surely be no raid this night; and to-morrow, if, God forbid, one takes place, my husband will take you betimes to one of the rich Claus members, who aren't molested by the police."

"How do you know there'll be no raid to-night?" I queried, thinking uneasily of the little boy and myself.

"What have I given him tea gratis for," the woman returned, "if not to be well informed about this matter? He has promised us to notify us immediately of any raid in preparation, of which, in with the police, he can easily learn. If a raid were to come off this night, he would already have known about it. The policemen know about the raids three days in advance; this told me the good policeman that had his round in this precinct last winter, and that often came to us."

Reminded by Reb Shlome that it was time for me to go, I took leave of the kind-hearted restaurant couple and wished the little boy a quiet night.

"A quiet night! And what about the new police master and his new arrangements?" replied the Vil-

komirer brokenly, apparently and rightly believing the new autocratic innovator capable of preventing the policemen's customary long foreknowledge of the raids. He burst into a fresh flood of tears—a copious and heart-wringing drink-offering, forced, for the god of tyranny, from the eyes of an innocently suffering child.

II.

FLEEING FROM THE NEW CHIEF OF POLICE.

On leaving the restaurant, I saw the watchman again. He was standing on a ladder leaned against the wall of the Temple vestibule, and was maliciously scratching off with a knife all manner of notices, written on paper in Hebrew and Yiddish. The removed notices aroused my sympathy, especially one of which the only word "failures" had remained stuck to the wall, and in which one of the wags of the neighborhood, referring to the numerous Vilna bankruptcies, which signalized that winter, had politely requested the respected public to bestir itself about its failures and to close them before the coming of New Year, after which they would be forbidden.

"Why are you scratching these bills off?" I asked Ivan.

"The new police master has ordered their removal," was the answer, "because they're not written in Russian."

"But this is no street," I was about to protest against the high-handed order, when my attention was drawn to a sudden, panic-like stir in the Temple courtyard and in the adjoining little street called Jewish Street.

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"The new police master! the new police master!" it ran, terror-striking, from mouth to mouth; and in a trice all were fleeing wildly in various directions. The women fruit-sellers, who, potfuls of glowing coal under them and basketfuls of frozen apples before them, had, for lack of space, been seated near the middle of the narrow street, obstructing it, hurried with their goods into the nearest yards; the women selling cakes and peas in the Temple courtyard ran through the Claus portico into the other part of the yard; the peddlers with their baskets took refuge in the Temple vestibule.

A light vehicle, followed by a mounted Cossack with a malicious smile, drove up the half-deserted street and stopped. In it, casting about him fiery glances, was seated the new chief of police, a tall, pale, middle-aged, and uniformed gentleman, with severe and energetic features. The passers-by, hardly daring throw a side glance at him, removed their caps with outward fear of reverence and inward fear of the Cossack's knout. Some of them, in their display of respect for the high official, went even to the point of taking off two caps, the outer one and a skull-cap underneath; and would have taken off even their heads had they been sure they could restore them to their former positions on the necks, with the noses looking forward instead of backward, so as not to offend the police chief's deep sense of order.

A blast from the chief's whistle brought on a run several policemen, who received the stern command to chase away the women blocking the street and to arrest those acting disorderly in the yards of that neighborhood. The latter were the people who, because of the absence of sewerage and their disinclination to carry at night the slop-tubs containing the results of the whole day down so many flights of stairs, used to empty them from the balconies or through the windows of the higher stories, the contents leaving the upper regions preceded by the cry of "Hitzech!"—Huetet euch!—and reaching the ground with an uproarious splash. These accumulated slops, in themselves orderly and law-abiding, obeying the law of gravitation and always falling down instead of up to those higher up in the city administration and responsible for the lack of sewerage, were often a source of great disorder to some of the passers-by in the open yards upon whose ears the warning "Hitzech!" accidently not well timed, and the unclean liquids fell at the same moment ; or who, hastening devoutly the next morning to their prayer, slipped on the frozen slops, broke their legs, and, piously resigned, said to themselves, "All comes from above."

On giving his commands, the chief of police, the chased spectre of disorder before him and the knout-equipped Cossack, the embodiment of his despotic will, behind him, departed. The policemen then

read in their pocketbooks — the only books they could read and understand—that the venders must be let alone till the reappearance of the police chief; and the women and the peddlers, the latter, by saying their evening prayer, having done in the Temple vestibule in the little while more profitable business for the other world than they had done in the court-yard the whole day for this world, left their refuges and returned to their former places.

III.

OTHER PASSPORTLESS CHILDREN IN DREAD OF THE POLICE.

As I crossed Jewish Street, my ear was struck by a growing noise, which had been evidently interrupted by the visitation of the chief of police. It was the usual noise issuing from Remailes Claus, a kind of Talmudic half-boarding school, situated on the top-floor of a building in Jewish Street and occupied by little boys, whose singing silver tones, with which they studied the Talmud the whole day and the evening, cheeringly fell, like rays of song, from on high into the saddened hearts of the pious and bitterly struggling people of that neighborhood.

"Where's the Keidanier?" I asked a boy on entering the school to deliver the letter to the Keidanier boy.

"What do you need him for?" asked the boy in accordance with the Russian Talmud students' habit of answering a question with a question instead of with an answer.

"I've a letter for him from his parents," I returned.

"He has gone forth somewhere and will come back soon. You can leave the letter with me if you wish."

"I'll stay here a while," I said, taking a warm in-

terest in the unenviable and to me familiar lot of the inmates of that institution. "The new police master and his Cossack must have given you a bad scare; it was so quiet here before."

"They've not scared us at all; it's not the first time they were here. We were uneasy only about the poor women in the street, with many of whom we take our [charitable] noon meals."

"And how about the raids? Aren't you afraid of them?"

"Not in the least. There has never been a raid here; we're all very far from military duty, the eldest of us being under eleven. Besides, where's the Lord of the universe, in whom a Jew must trust? Where's the protecting merit of the holy Torah?"

A look about the room convinced me that the little boy was right; the life of that school appeared to flow unchecked by any anxiety. It resounded with the devout singing of the Talmud and also with the boisterous laughter of childhood, which gilded with its magic the poor boys' old, shabby folios, their dim, dripping tallow-candles, their scanty charity meals, and their wretched resting-places; which kept them ignorant of their lack of even that education which, in other countries, blooms for youth already in the kindergartens; and which, while their young minds were familiar with the celestial glories of their distant future after death, mercifully screened from them all knowledge of their miserable near

future in life. I was happy to see that the terror of the new police autocrat had not fallen upon the spirits of the unfortunate little children at least.

Standing at the windows opening into the street, several boys were trumpeting forth their diligence by singing their Talmud lessons at the top of their thin voices. They were holding little tallow-candles —tiny, humble servants to the great light of the Torah—by means of paper handles, in order to avoid making their fingers *tref*—ritually unclean—, and were swaying to and fro with such vehemence that their desks, upon which they leaned, seemed to have caught the infection, moved also to and fro, and shared, in their own lowly creaking way, the boys' singing, which greatly varied, each of the students preferring his own favorite melody, appropriated from some of the itinerant preachers in the neighboring synagogues. Away from their homes and confined nearly the whole day to their comfortless schoolroom, the poor little learners were thinking more of other things than of the Talmud; and, after taking a few words from the folios before them, they were singing them over and over till they had mentally taken a turn through all the streets of Vilna, had seen their parents again in their home towns, had sung there in the synagogues over the Talmud, and, singing there, had come back to Vilna.

I listened to their lesson. It hinged on the following passage:

"If his owner had tied him [the ox] with a halter and had properly shut the door before him, and he went forth and injured some one, the owner is liable."

With due attention, this paragraph can be studied through in a half minute; but with the little students it consumed no end of time. "If—his—owner—, if—his—owner," they were singing and stretching the words, in the Talmudic idiom and in Yiddish, countless times and could not go ahead, as if the owner had tied them also with the halter. When they had at last finished the first part of the sentence, they began to repeat in the same way the second: "Had tied him with the halter." The little boys were apparently trying hard to prevent with their melodies the dangerous animal from doing mischief; but their efforts were of no avail; for finally the "proper shutting" was also sung to an end, and—oh, terror!—the beast repeatedly rushed out, repeatedly inflicted injury, and repeatedly made the poor owner liable for it.

With one of the singers that was away from the windows, however, the owner and the ox, instead of repeating their actions, now and then suddenly stopped them altogether and as suddenly resumed them. The reason for this was that the learner, from time to time, half turned over some leaves of his folio and cast furtive looks into some little book interfering with the study of the Talmud and yet

hidden by its very leaves, like a robber concealed and protected by the very house he is robbing.

Seated at a tallow-smeared table, several students, taking their studies more seriously, were engaged in a heated dispute about the interpretation of a passage having the notorious ox for its central point; and, as if drawing inspiration from the ferocious brute, they were yelling at the top of their lungs and wildly gesticulating with their right hands, the thumbs and the forefingers of which looked yellow at the tips from snuffing the candles.

Bending over his folio and holding a candle, a student was trying hard to ward off oncoming sleep; but he soon nodded, slanting the candle; and the hot tallow flowed over the owner, the ox, the halter, and the injured, to whom now also the leaves of the book belonged. Another boy, pointed out to me as one of the *mathmidim*—students of extraordinary diligence—of the *yeshivah,* was taking a nap against his wish, his head resting on the table and a little candle-stump, the sinking flame of which was to prevent his oversleeping, burning between the fingers of his outstretched hand. In so doing, he emulated the grown-up *mathmidim* in the neighboring institutions, who, in study, led the way with their shining examples—between their fingers.

At one table several children, about to take their meagre supper, consisting of small quantities of bread and cheese, were dividing the edibles, which they

had been compelled to buy in partnership, by lot, one of the partners putting a piece of straw under one part and a piece of paper under the other, and asking the other partner what he wanted, straw or paper.

Several students entrusted with the collection in the streets of funds for the benefit of the *yeshivah* were busy emptying the contribution boxes again and again, counting their contents repeatedly, and discussing the collections animatedly. Walking from one table to another, a boy was gathering candle-stumps, which he put into a box to keep them for sale. The proceeds belonged to him; and, in their return, he swept the floor of the school—swept it just as much, and not more, as not to interfere with the study of the *mathmidim,* who also claimed the stumps for their fingers.

In the background some boys were playing about noisily with upperclothes and underclothes, which served them for pillows, and with torn mattresses, which, bountiful but wasteful like Nature, were shedding profusely their straw-contents for the benefit of the children's meals, divided by lot through straw and paper.

His face turned toward east and his eyes closed, a student was doing his belated evening devotion, and was shaking so vehemently that his side-locks were swinging to and fro between his ears and his nose.

"Kovnoer, where are you?" called to him some-

one, apparently his supper partner. "What do you want, straw or paper?"

"Blow the great trumpet for our freedom," returned the Kovnoer in Hebrew, indicating that he was saying his prayer.

"Bialystoker, why are you disturbing the Kovnoer in his devotion?" called a voice in mock anger from somewhere; and an horizontal rain of rolled-up towels and rags ensued, hitting the disturber and the worshiper. A part of the rain branched off to the students arguing about the ox and put out at once the fire of their candles and that of their disputation.

At a table near the heated stove were seated the wags of the school and their attentive audience, each of the former striving for a chance of contributing his best to the amusement of the latter. The hearty, noisy laughter of the hapless and yet so gay children could not but draw me nearer to their table and make me listen.

"Shavlier, do you know how the Czar drinks tea?" asked a boy.

"I know," was the answer; "the Minsker told me that. He takes a whole loaf of sugar—the Czar can afford it—bores a hole into it, and pours a glass of tea into the hole, thus having the sweetest tea in the land."

"Why don't they make stoves—," tried a little boy, apparently the youngest in the company, to

give his best, but was interrupted by an elder comrade, who, inconsiderately claiming the floor for himself, said:

"But how the Czar breakfasts none of you knows."

"I know," replied some one; "the same as with the tea: he takes a whole barrel of butter, bores a hole into it—"

"And then what? Keep quiet, you are a fool.—They prepare for him in the morning a coat of hot *bliny* [a kind of Russian pancake], made of the finest wheat-flour, and fill its pockets with the best cream or butter. This coat he puts on, seats himself comfortably upon his throne, tears off now a button, now a lapel, now the collar, now a piece of a sleeve, dips these and other parts of the garment into its pockets, and conveys them to his mouth."

"Why don't they make the stoves—," began again the little boy and was again silenced by another comrade, who called aloud:

"You're all fools! The Czar doesn't eat at all, for hasn't he enough servants to do the eating for him?"

"Why should—"

"When Adam, the first man, went into the bath-house—"

"Why don't they make the stoves—"

"Keep quiet, Pinsker, I'll ask you something. Have you been in the new museum?"

"No! I've hardly money enough for my suppers."

"There's on exhibition there a large and wonderfully preserved horn, which once belonged to one of Pharaoh's seven fat cows."

"You can't fool me, Swentzianier; the seven fat cows were totally consumed by the seven lean ones, so that nothing was left of them to be preserved."

"You're a big fool, Pinsker; that was a dream."

"Ha! ha! ha!"

"When Adam, the first man—"

"Why don't they make the stoves of butter or fat?" the smallest boy finally succeeded in getting the floor.

"Because the stoves would melt if—"

"Ha! ha! ha! This every simpleton could answer. Because on butter-stoves we couldn't cook meat-dishes, and on fat-stoves we couldn't cook milk-dishes."

"Ha! ha! ha!"

"When Adam—"

"If a synagogue is opened only on the Sabbath, when do they take the money out of the alms-boxes?"

"The sexton could enter the synagogue on week-days and empty—"

"Ha! ha! ha! When a synagogue is opened only on the Sabbath, nobody puts money into the boxes."

"When—"

"Listen, boys—"

"Give the Polotsker a chance once; he is struggling so long for it."

"When Adam, the first man, went into the bath-house to bathe, who watched his clothes?"

"There were yet no thieves to steal."

"What a fool! Adam had no clothes."

"Ha! ha! ha!"

"Well, Rabbi, have you to-day some new miracle to surprise us with?" asked someone, addresing himself to an histrionically gifted boy, who, familiar with the doings of the Chasidim—the adherents of a Jewish sect—, had often, in similar gatherings, played their miracle-working leader.

"Of course," came the answer; "the rabbi's power is infinite."

With this, the boy cast a stealthy glance at one of the students, who left the table unnoticed by his companions; then the little rabbi surrounded himself with pretended adherents, assumed a transfigured appearance, spoke a few words of the Chasidic lore, and turned his attention to the door of an adjoining room, which had a little hole above the lock, and which—oh, wonder of wonders!—all of a sudden became endowed with life and intelligence and, at his signal to it with his right or left hand, now opened, now closed by itself. The little Chasidim simulated amazement, snapped their fingers in accordance with the Chasidic custom, and burst into

a ringing "Bim-bam! bim-bam!" the text of Chasidic melodies.

At this point the Keidani boy entered, and I delivered the letter to him, which he took to a remote table for an undisturbed perusal.

"And the rabbi's power isn't yet exhausted," resumed the little actor. "I'm going to perform another miracle, which will convert all disbelieving *Mithnaggedim* [the opponents of the Chasidim], and make them flock to me for my blessings. Who of you wants to hear the dead scream? I don't mean you, Ostrover, for you're a new boy here, and it's against our sense of hospitality to frighten you with the screams of the dead."

"Never mind, Slonimer," replied the credulous Ostrov boy, going into the trap; "I'm as courageous as any one of you."

"All right, then," said the little rabbi. "Lie down upon the floor with your ear at the threshold; I'll circle around you seven times; and at the last one, when I stand at your head, pull yourself up quickly, and you'll hear the dead scream. But you must remove the side-locks from your ears that you may hear them better."

The Ostrover, on bravely following the other instructions, raised his head quickly from the ground and, the Slonimer having stepped upon one of his ear-locks, emitted a cry of pain, thus "hearing the dead scream." The onlookers burst out laughing,

and a new enthusiastic "Bim-bam! bim-bam!" in admiration of the wonder-rabbi filled the room.

"You're singing and laughing, children," called the Keidani boy aloud, stepping up to the table, "as if everything were all right with you, and there were no *eth-tzarah* [a time of trouble] for you. Do you know, children, that, within a few hours, God forbid, all of you may be dragged to the police station, be beaten, and be jailed to be dragged again to your home towns on foot by étape?"

These words fell among the cheerful boys like a thunderbolt from a clear sky and attracted the attention of the other inmates of the schoolroom, who left their folios, their supper, and their plays and joined in consternation the gathering near the stove.

"Why, what's the matter, Keidanier?" asked several boys, terrified.

"This is the matter," replied the Keidanier, pointing to his letter. "My father writes to me he has learned from Vilna people that, thanks to the new police master, every *yeshivah* will be raided this winter, no matter whether its occupants are our age or grown-up.—Thank God, I have a passport," the boy added joyously and proudly, producing some writing in Russian and giving it the dignity of a regular passport; "my father has sent it to me."

"There'll surely be no raid upon this *yeshivah*,"

I tried to quiet the children; "I've reliable information—"

"Your reliable information is nothing," interrupted me the Keidanier boldly; "my father knows what he's talking about. If you've some good information, keep it for yourself; for you are more than we in danger of being arrested."

"I've a passport," I replied, "and am not afraid of the police."

"Do not be so cock-sure, Reb—what is your name?" rejoined the forward boy; "my father writes to me that every young man, with or without a passport, is in danger of arrest. You seem to know very little about the new police master. Children," he went on, "my father tells me he advises you to write to your fathers for papers. Take forthwith your writing materials, all of you, and tell your parents of the danger you're in."

"I'll write the addresses for you," volunteered one of the boys; "I know how to read Russian and how to write both the Russian small letters and the capitals."

It was the boy who, at the time for the study of the Talmud, had clandestinely been looking into some little book, which evidently was a Russian primer.

"But what, Keidanier, are we to do before we get our papers from our homes?" asked fearfully the God-trusting boy to whom I had first spoken on

entering the school. "They're likely to come even to-night. I'm so afraid of the policemen."

"Who's not afraid of them, Vitebsker?" returned the other. "They treat the passportless like criminals and beat them mercilessly. I've heard enough about them in the other *yeshivahs*. We shall have to look out for hiding-places," he went on, after a pause, reflectively; "so do all grown-up students around here. I guess there must be plenty of such places here, especially in the loft above, under—"

"In the loft!" broke in a boy aghast, "in the loft at the time of night, perhaps, when the devils are in power!"

"Never mind the devils, Rumshishkier," replied the Keidanier; "the policemen will easily make you forget them. My cousin from Swentziany, who's studying in Chevrah-Torah this year, told me that, surprised at night in winter by an approaching raid and driven by the fear of it, he had run up into the loft of a five-story house—a place that he would be afraid to enter even in the daytime. The loft was as long and as dark as our *goluth* [exile], and in his rush, he stumbled and fell among Passover dishes, breaking them and injuring himself."

"That was surely the work of the devils," remarked one of the listeners, shuddering. "I'll go by no means into the loft at night."

"We ought to chant the Psalms every night, for ourselves and for our grown-up comrades, who're in

greater danger," said the pious Vitebsker, looking for rescue higher than in the loft—in heaven.

"The Vitebsker is right," agreed some one; "let's chant the Psalms, and God'll surely save us from their hands."

"Ostrover," said the little actor, evidently afraid to pray to God with his conscience burdened, "I hope you'll pardon me for having hurt you before. I was carried away by the fun of it; I like fun, you know—that's my nature."

"If you mean it earnestly," returned the other suspiciously, "you've my full pardon."

"So I mean it, I swear to it," said the Slonimer; and both little students shook hands.

"Let's chant the twentieth Psalm every night," suggested the Vitebsker; "my father told me it's very effective in misfortune. It has always helped me when I was short of a 'day' [gratuitous meals for one day in the week], and it excellently suits the occasion: 'May the Lord answer thee in the day of trouble—' "

The poor boy could not finish the verse; the word "trouble" had caused trouble to his feeling heart, and he burst into violent sobs, which broke his voice and drew the tears of some of his tender-hearted companions.

Thus, thanks to the new police despot, the poor children's merriment, which, in the midst of their misery, had looked like a rose-bush blooming in the

midst of a freezing snow-drift, terminated in gloom and tears. The little students soon set about writing to their parents; and, after trying again in vain to allay their fears, I left Remailes Claus to see about my prospective position.

IV.

DISCUSSING POLICE RAIDS AND MILITARY SERVICE.

I did not find Reb Johanan, the locksmith, in his home and learned from his two young sons, who were repairing old locks at a working-table, that he was in Chevrah-Torah, the house of prayer and study situated on the same floor.

Here, this evening, all the folios were closed or had not been opened at all. The Talmud students of this *yeshivah* were boys above the age of seventeen. Cultivating, like their numerous unfortunate fellow students in Vilna, exclusively an ancient tree of knowledge, which bore noble fruit for their young souls, but none for their underfed bodies, and which did not harbor one feathered singer to sing to them the song of youth and pleasure, these poor lads had, in addition to their privations, to endure the torments of terror every winter. With the exception of one of them who, ignorant of the new police chief's order forbidding the posting of announcements written in Yiddish, was writing on his desk a Yiddish notice for somebody, they were all, standing about the warm stove, discussing, as Reb Shlome had told me, past and prospective police

raids and talking themselves into greater and greater fear. Among the agitated youths was also Reb Johanan, a man about fifty years old, of medium stature, and with a black-bearded face, in which were depicted bigotry, naiveté, but also unusual kindness. Passing his hands behind his back to and fro across the heated stove, he was with double warmth participating in the general conversation.

"Yes," he said, "this winter they're by far severer than they were—"

"The new police master—" interrupted one of his listeners in explanation.

But the locksmith cut him short, continuing:

"It was really a miracle, a miracle from God, I tell you, that my nephew wasn't descried. Picture to yourselves: He was lying in the loft stretched out and covered with but a little straw; two policemen were searching for him high and low with their lanterns and were repeatedly standing hard by him; and, for all this, they couldn't find him. They were swearing terribly; for they were, as he recognized by their walking and talking, under the influence of vodka."

"They had the intoxication of Lot," put in one of the students.

"They must have drunk the four Passover cups," remarked another student.

"Yes," went on Reb Johanan, "times are very hard in winter. I've chanted nearly all the Psalms

to-day; there are so many Jewish people in the city that are prevented by poverty from renewing their passports in their native towns and are exposed to the danger of falling into *Goyish* [non-Jewish] hands."

"Especially are some Jewish young men of military age in danger," said one of the youths; "if they're arrested, woe's to them, and woe's to their broken-hearted parents."

With this, the conversation was somewhat changed; and the perturbed thoughts of the poor students were, for a while, diverted from the terrifying raids, as now one of them and now another spoke:

"Our enemies blame us for disliking military service; but why should we like it—we, who are treated worse than the dog; we, who are forbidden to tread on the ground of Holy Russia proper and are cooped up in a few overcrowded provinces to struggle and suffocate there?"

"Pinsker, you know my uncle. When a young man, he went to Austria; and do you know where he settled there? Not in one of the provincial cities, but right in Vienna, in the very capital of Austria, though he had but a Russian inland passport! But here, in the land of his birth, he could hardly have dreamed of staying one day in Petersburg."

"The Austrian Jews idolize their emperor and are always ready to shed their last drop of blood for

their country; and so are the Jews in other countries where they're treated humanely, especially in free America. But what reason has the Russian Jew for being grateful to his Country? Why should he kiss the Russian knout? Why should he learn how to fight and then fight for the aggrandizement of his cruel fatherland?"

"The Jew, Kovnoer, needn't, anyhow, fight for Russia to aggrandize her; he makes her great by merely being persecuted by her; 'Every one that oppresses Israel becomes a chief,' says the Talmud.

"The service alone, Polotsker, quite apart from fighting, is enough to inspire the Russian Jew with repugnance to itself. Think of it! A Jewish young man, strictly brought up in the religion of his forefathers, is dragged away to a distant province to serve there in the army, where, in spite of his superior intelligence, he can't hope for promotion; where he must often live with half-savage Asiatic soldiers and eat with them out of the same caldron the forbidden and rotten food, which permeates them so that one squad of them is enough to befoul the air of the street they happen to pass; and where he's despised and persecuted by the very men with whom he's serving his country."

"The Cossacks, when they've a chance, especially delight in harassing the Jewish soldier, who—"

"Oh, don't speak of the Cossacks, Rossienier; they persecute every soldier, Jew or non-Jew. My

brother-in-law told me that, when in the army, he and other Jewish or Gentile soldiers used to hide themselves in the corn whenever, walking through the fields, they saw a Cossack galloping down the road."

"And these Cossack gentlemen with knouts are charged with the maintenance of law and order in Russia!"

"I often saw their gentlemanliness in Shavli. Whenever they rode by our store, they picked up with their lances a number of rolls, baked by my poor slaving mother and lying in the opened store-window. They paid her, of course—with a loud and contemptuous laugh. They're perfect gentlemen."

"The policemen here, Shavlier," said a student, leading the conversation back to the disquieting topic of the police, "aren't a whit better than they; to judge by the heartless beatings the policemen give to their prisoners, they're veritable Cossacks, except that but few of them have horses."

"They're horses themselves, Janishkier; they can't even read a passport. If you sometimes see a mounted policeman, it's a case of a vicious horse riding a quiet one."

"I wonder whether they receive orders from their superiors to strike their prisoners."

"Their superiors aren't a bit better than they; but they can do things without an order from any one. If they want to go on a spree, they make lit-

tle nightly private raids on their own account, threaten the waked-up people with arrest for having no passports or for faulty ones, and thus collect money for vodka."

"How can they, Janovaer, find faults in the passports if they can't read them?"

"You're a fool, Vilkier. Couldn't you understand me to mean that they pretend to find faults in them? Besides, considering the total illiteracy and the dense stupidity of the Vilna policemen, they may hold the passports upside down, thus finding the words in them very improperly printed and written."

"You call me a fool, Janovaer, while you're yourself one; if they can hold the passports upside down, they can't but find the words in them all right."

"Ha! ha! ha! The Vilkier can't understand a joke."

"I merely wanted to retaliate upon the Janovaer for having insulted me; you're all fools."

"The better for all of us; now we're safe from the expected raids: 'The Lord guardeth the simple.'"

"The new police master seems to differ with King David; he causes the arrest of all, of the foolish as well of—"

"Look how nicely my memorial candle is burning!" called Reb Johanan joyously, turning the sub-

ject all of a sudden and pointing toward the reader's desk, on which a wax candle of extraordinary height was burning; "to-day's already the tenth anniversary of my father's death—peace be with him!—"

"Why do you light so tall a candle?" asked him one of the students; "a memorial candle need burn only twenty-four hours."

"It's not my fault," was the answer; "I can't make profane use of the remnant of a memorial candle; and when I order every year the wax-chandler to make one for me, I tell him to add to it the remnant of the candle of the preceding year."

"And what will you do, Reb Johanan, when your candle will have reached the ceiling?" queried another student.

At this question the locksmith felt embarrassed; but I came to his rescue by handing him Reb Shlome's letter of recommendation. At the sight of it, he greeted me most cordially, his warm hand, which united the warmth of the stove and that of his kind heart, shaking mine vigorously.

"I'm glad to see you," he said on perusing the letter! "my son is just in need of a good bookkeeper. How to figure, he knows himself; he does the figuring with chalk on a spade or on a lock, and his wife is still better at it; but how to write an invoice or a letter, neither of them knows. But this will be your business, and I hope you'll be satisfied with my son.

You'll find him now at the railroad station, to which he has driven a while ago with a load of goods. You'll easily recognize him, for he has but one eye."

Reb Johanan was about to add something, when the door flew open, and in dashed a young Talmud student, beaming with joy and drawing the attention of all to himself.

"Bobruisker, Suwalkier, Rumshishkier," he called in great excitement, "look, look, I've a passport already! I've received it just now together with a letter from my parents; the Smorgon driver has brought them to me. Do you see, Shavlier? You had a poor opinion of my parents because of their failure to send me a passport sooner. Read the letter, and you'll see how you've misjudged them, how much the passport has cost them. The last copper dishes they have pawned to raise the four rubles—"

With this, he hastened into the centre of the synagogue, turned his eyes upward, as if about to offer up a prayer of thanksgiving, and cried at the top of his voice:

"Reb Itzele! Reb Itzele!"

In the middle of the ceiling, which lay in semi-darkness, something began to stir mysteriously, and a large square opening appeared, through which an elderly woman, a lighted candle in her hand, looked down into the room. The opening, which was destined to disembarrass Reb Johanan in after-years

when his tall anniversary candle had approached the ceiling, united, as I subsequently learned, the synagogue with a large garret, which served the women of the neighborhood for a place of worship and the family of the sexton of Chevrah-Torah, named Reb Itzele, for a home. It was equipped with a balustrade and two trap-doors, which were open during services only for the benefit of the feminine worshipers.

"What's the matter, Smorgoner?" asked the woman. "My husband's away."

"Tell him," called the student up jubilantly, "that I've a passport already, and that he may be so kind as to attend to its viséing to-morrow. Four rubles it has cost—my mother has pawned her last—"

"And the viséing-fee?" interrupted the sexton's wife angrily. "Shall my husband, perhaps, spend his money for you? And where's his trouble? Must he drag himself with the house register to the police station for nothing? He hasn't received a single kopeck from you, though you've been here already over six months."

"Please lend me fifteen kopecks, Shavlier," turned the Smorgoner to his comrade; "you know I've no money now, I'm short of two 'days.'"

"And have I all 'days'?" replied the other, refusing the Smorgoner's request.

The poor boy, his great joy over his passport suddenly marred by the lack of a paltry few ko-

pecks, as a large fruit is spoiled by a little worm, stood bitterly disappointed; and the trap-doors began slowly to descend. The kind-hearted Reb Johanan, however, soon stepped up to him and "lent," that is, gave him the required sum. The trap-doors rose again, and the woman reached down her hand through the opening, received the passport and the money, and said:

"You can consider yourself lucky, Smorgoner, that you've a passport; the more so because very rigorous inspections are soon to take place. This all we owe to the new police master," she added, and the doors closed.

"I'm really lucky!" shouted the student, beside himself with happiness. "Thank God, now I can study peacefully."

And hurriedly he went to his desk, opened his folio, and struck up a cheerful Talmud melody, which carried the exultation of his overbrimming heart into the remotest nooks of the misery-filled *yeshivah,* and which was softly accompanied by the sighs of his unfortunate and envious passportless comrades.

V.

IN THE HANDS OF GENDARMES.

I set out for the railroad station and soon turned out of Meat Street into German Street. Here I saw a policeman arrest an old woman, who, in violation of an ordinance from the new city ruler, had dared carry in an important thoroughfare a basket of fruit for sale. The sight of an old woman, who should have been more or less provided for, trudging about in the street with a basket for a living, is certainly offensive to the sense of order; the sight of the same old woman starving at home is, of course, also against order. But the new chief of police had confined his mission of establishing order in Vilna to the streets and the yards and cared, besides passportlessness, little for the inside of the houses ; else he would not have permitted the poorer tenants in a building to live high above the wealthier ones, and the books, the champions of everything decent and orderly, to stand in the closets shamelessly with their backs toward the people.

In front of the theatre I saw the arrest of a droshky-driver by a policeman, who boarded the vehicle, seated himself comfortably, and ordered its owner to drive to some police department.

"This is again a matter of order," I thought to myself; "the driver, against the wish of the innovating new police chief, must have stuck to the old-fashioned disorderly arrangement, in accordance with which the horse went first, the driver next, and, quite in the rear, the respected passenger, instead of their moving in reversed and proper order."

But soon I learned that his arrest had been the consequence of his failure to comply with the new regulations, which ordered the drivers, besides their prescribed peculiar costumes, to wear their license numbers—just as the educating but uneducated and ill-behaving books do their names—on their backs, for the better convenience of their fares.

After seeing a more dramatic scene outside the theatre than some might have seen inside it, I passed it and arrived soon at the railroad station.

Here, on learning that my prospective employer had left the station for a while, I seated myself upon a bench near the door leading to the platform, and waited. Scarcely, however, had I sat for two minutes, when a Jew stepped up to me in great agitation and asked me under his breath how I had had the temerity to enter the railroad station at that severe time when, at the strict command of the new police master, gendarmes keep a special eye there on every young man. Disquieted, in spite of my passport, by the man's excited words, I could not help stealing an anxious look at two

gendarmes standing at some distance, and noticed, to my increased alarm, that they were exchanging significant glances, which, I thought, concerned me. Soon, indeed, one of them began to advance toward me slowly. The sympathetic Jew looked up frightened and stepped aside.

"Where are you going?" asked me the gendarme severely, twirling both ends of his huge mustache, as if wishing to point them well in order to pierce my peace with one of them and my liberty with the other.

"I'm going nowhere," I replied with growing unrest; "I'm merely waiting for—"

"You seem to err," the gendarme interrupted me sarcastically.

"If you don't believe me, I can prove it to you," I mustered up the courage to say and took a few steps toward the exit of the station. But the other gendarme blocked my way.

"Wait a little," he said to me; "have you documents?"

Several non-Jewish station employees looked at me maliciously; a few Jewish passengers stole up slowly and anxiously to us. I showed the gendarme my passport, and he did wonders in reading it.

"Is this your passport?" he asked me when he had done examining the document.

"Is this your mustache?" I wished to ask him indignantly on my part, but, instead, returned quietly:

"You've read my identification marks in the passport."

"And why have you changed your mind so suddenly about leaving the city?"

"It hasn't occurred to me at all to do it."

"And what are you doing at the railroad station?"

"I'm waiting here for somebody."

"For a few comrades of military age, who want to leave the city, eh?"

"I've no comrades here; I'm waiting for an ironmonger of this city."

"And why have you been sitting near the platform-door?"

"That's yet no proof that I had the intention of leaving Vilna; I've bought no ticket."

"That's yet no proof that you didn't think of leaving the city; people use to travel without a ticket."

"Please let me go my way," I called, stung to the quick by the gendarme's last insulting words, with a touch of anger in my voice, which caused the Jews near me to look up at me with uneasiness; "or take me to the police station if you question my integrity."

"Please let him go," I heard some one say behind me; "I know him to be an orderly and honest young man."

I turned around and saw, to my greatest joy, the one-eyed eldest son of Reb Johanan. He had in

the meantime returned, had taken in my critical situation, and interceded for me, offering on the altar of brotherly love a few charitable words, which, being an untruth—he did not know me—would have been an offering quite unworthy of the altar had he not in them sacrificed truth, a sacrifice as noble as its recipient, brotherly love. The other Jews, gladly participating in the offering, likewise testified to my honesty. The joint intercessions, beside my passport properly quite unnecessary, had their effect, and the gendarme dismissed me, saying:

"Your luck that you have a passport, else you wouldn't get off so easily, but would be dragged to the police station."

"That I've a passport, the gendarme knew before," I thought to myself, greatly mortified, "why, then, has he annoyed me so long?"

Thinking which, I took hold of him mentally, pulled off his hair, including his formidable mustache, and let him go with the severe remark that it was his luck that he was not a turkey, else he would not get off so easily, but would go into the seething pot. Whereupon I turned to the hardware merchant with my thanks and told him what had brought me to the railroad station. In-

stead, however, of saying something to me about the position open with him, he asked me with ill-concealed anger, which greatly puzzled me, to accompany him on his way home, as he had to speak to me about something important.

VI.

OUT OF THE FRYING-PAN INTO THE FIRE.

I left the station with the ironmonger, and we walked silently toward the interior of the city. When we had gone some distance, he suddenly halted, looked about cautiously in all directions, and whispered to me excitedly:

"Young man, how dare you tramp about in the city at this critical time! Don't you know that, at the order of the new police master, policemen are patrolling everywhere? You rely upon your passport, but at this dangerous time it affords very little guarantee for your safety. When, God forbid, you're stopped in the street by policemen, you are entirely at their mercy; you're then dragged to a police station, from where, at the whim of the captain, you're liable to be dragged to the police jail, where you stay one or two days till your case is investigated. Do you know what it means to stay in the police jail? I don't wish it to anybody, not even to the enemies of Israel. One can be suffocated there—one's put there among ruffians of the worst kind—one's insulted and brutally beaten there—About the position you could speak to me in my store tomorrow morning, instead of

tramping about in the night. My father really does not know what he is doing; at this dangerous time he sends a young man to—"

My sympathetic companion stopped short, apparently realizing the terrible effect upon me of his words, which, uttered under his breath, had pierced my heart like so many noiseless daggers. Great fear had come upon me; the feeling of safety I had harbored on getting rid of the gendarmes, was now totally gone; and the last bit of peace, which, like the moisture sticking to the walls of a glass emptied of its liquid contents, might have remained in me, was, it seemed to me, carried away by the train leaving with a whistle not far from us.

"Your father, like me," I tried to justify myself and his father, "mustn't have yet heard of the patrols; this order of the new police chief must be brand-new."

The storekeeper said nothing, and we went onward in silence, approaching Horse Market. A shiver ran through my frame, causing my teeth to chatter and rendering it hard for me to speak. This my good-hearted new friend must have noticed, for he soon made an attempt to allay the terror he had struck to my heart.

"For all this", he said, "you mustn't tremble so; God will help and protect you until the danger is over".

But only the last of my companion's kind words

telling me that the danger was not yet over, produced an effect upon me; and my disquiet increased. In order to protect myself somewhat from the police patrols, I raised the collar of my furcoat and lowered my head, so that anticipating my future years, I formed on my back a considerable hump, down which, I hoped, the danger of being recognized as a young man might easily slide.

Thus one-eyed and hunchbacked, we soon reached Horse Market. Here my friend renewed his attempt to quiet me; but there was no necessity of it any longer; the peril of being arrested hanging over my head was soon to be over.

"Stoy! Derżhi!" [Stand! Hold!] an imperious voice suddenly called behind us.

The ironmonger stopped abruptly in his talk to me; his whispered, soothing Yiddish words died on his lips, killed by the noisy, domineering Russian words, which, for a moment, made us stand motionless and thoughtless with fright. Before we knew it, we found ourselves in the midst of a large company composed of policemen and arrested young Vilnaers. Our captors approached us with a malicious look, which, in spite of my situation, I managed to requite with a similar look; for they, to their bitter disappointment, forthwith made the discovery that both new prisoners, in whom they believed to have arrested two young men of

military age, had but three eyes. As I had the greater part of the three eyes, the policemen turned their attention exclusively to me. They lowered my raised collar, raised my lowered head, thus removing my hump, and deluged me with questions.

"Have you documents?" asked me one of them. "Where are you from?" queried another. "Have you been at the railroad station?" demanded a third. Whom hast *thou* accompanied to the railroad station?" interrogated a fourth, his use of "thou" by no means due to affection for me on his part.

I produced my passport and handed it to one of the officers that appeared to be politer than the others.

"You're a polite person", I flattered him;" please examine my passport and let me go; you see it's viséed."

The policeman, after some hesitancy, began to read my passport by the glimmer of a lantern. Like the gendarme at the railroad station, he did wonders in reading; but, unfortunately, only in the printed lines of the document; in the written words he stuck miserably, every mistake he made costing him much trouble, as every financial loss does some speculator. When he came to a hard word that he could not read even faultily, I made bold to come to his assistance by prompting. But another police-

man soon hindered me in my helpful work.

"Silence!" he thundered wrathfully, the roaring loudness of the word totally crushing its contrary meaning; and I, together with the ignorant officer, kept still.

"Accursed snowflakes! one can't read in this beastly weather," muttered the would-be reader after a while, folded my passport, and pocketed it. "You must come with us to the police station," he added, turning to me, "where the captain will examine your passport."

"But permit me—," interceded for me my companion in great excitement again; "this man has a viséed passport—I know him to be an honest man—he is my bookkeeper—"

"Where did you intend to lead and hide this young man?" interrupted him a policeman roughly.

"To the police station, all of you!" commanded another officer at the same time; and the whole company set itself in motion, dragging with it the resisting ironmonger.

"What do you want with me?" he protested vehemently. "I'm a resident of this city—I've a hardware store in Meat Street—every one knows me—"

"Let him go," interposed the polite policeman; "what will you do with this blind man?"

Happy that he had succeeded in saving his own skin, my released friend hastened, as I afterward

learned, to his father to inform him sorrowfully and reproachfully of my arrest; while I, in company of my fellow prisoners, trudged sadly toward the police station of the second precinct, which was situated on Horse Market. Our hearts beat violently, and our captors laughed merrily. . . .

VII.

THE CAPTAIN'S BILINGUAL EXAMINATION.

We soon reached the police station and entered a large, warm room. The captain, who was to examine us, was away, and we were told he would come back at ten o'clock. As it was half-past nine, we had to wait. The policeman that had pocketed my passport produced it, unfolded it, and placed it upon a writing table in an adjoining salon. The young Vilnaers stationed themselves together at a wall; I leaned at a window and meditated anxiously on my situation and my surroundings.

"Look," I said to myself, "how that policeman there is sneering at you, and how he is standing at the door, guarding argus-eyed against your slipping out into liberty, which you might lose again in the street. . . Several policemen are going out for a new catch, and these remain here and rejoice over those already caught. Would they rejoice so if they were not sure that the police jail is waiting for us. . . These wooden benches at the wall, are they not policemen, crouching on all fours and ready suddenly to rise when some of the captives should seat themselves upon them? Else the poor prisoners

would not be afraid to sit down. . . . Where does this room lead? Into the open adjoining salon, in which the captain will soon examine us. And where does the salon lead? Into the police jail, of course, where we shall be mercilessly beaten. . . .

To this contemplation my imagination stuck pertinaciously; and the deeper it penetrated into the jail, the freer it became, and the more terrible became its pictures. It was but the opening of the station door that could tear me away from them.

A tall, lean, long-bearded, and red-haired Jew about thirty years of age, clad in a worn-out fur-coat, was brought in by two policemen.

"A dishtinguished gentleman this here!" jeered one of the captors.

"He speaks three languages in one minute: Russian, Polish, and Yiddish," joked the other policeman.

The Jew trembled in his whole body and appeared to murmur a prayer. He struck me as familiar, and I tried to recollect where I might have seen him. I gave him, however, no further attenion, but began to prepare answers for the approaching examination.

Soon the clock struck ten; and in the salon appeared a beardless young man, who could have been standing in the anteroom as a prisoner had he not happened to be the captain. The policemen rose from their seats, and the young captives broke off

their whispered conversation and exchanged apprehensive glances. The arrested newcomer stood in deep dejection and sank his head lower and lower, as if in fear of drawing upon himself through his tall form the special displeasure of the examiner; in his countenance, beside the expression of anxiety from before, was now depicted profound reverence, which, in his full realization of the danger he was in, had nothing artificial about it. In his overmastering agitation at the appearance of the captain, the unhappy prisoner had not noticed that his furcoat had come into contact with a glowing part of the stove, near which he was standing; and an offensive smell spread through the house.

"Your stinking furcoat's burning!" said to him a policèman, in whose short sentence, uttered under his breath, lay, like three various beasts of prey crammed into a small cage, wrath, hatred, and contempt.

The prisoner, absorbed in the dreadful thought of the expected examination, did not catch the meaning of the muttered words hurled at him, and looked, frightened and confused, now into the salon toward the captain, surveying the prisoners in the anteroom, now toward the exasperated officer, who could have eaten him up alive, though he could not stand a Jew. Scarcely, however, had I left the window to enlighten the prisoner regarding his furcoat, when, interpreting the policeman's wrath-

ful utterance in his own way, he cleaned his nose quickly, entered the salon hurriedly, and remained at the door with deeply bowed head. A few officers, outwardly raging and inwardly laughing, rushed after him to drive him out of the salon; but they did not do so, for the captain accosted him.

"What do you want here?" he asked him angrily. "Have you no patience to wait till you're called?—Fie! what kind of devilish odor's here?" he went on, addressing himself to his subordinates.

The prisoner, whose knowledge of Russian was limited to a few words, imagining to be examined and referring the captains question to his pasportlessness, was about to say something in his justification; but he was prevented from doing so by the policemen, who stated the now exhausted source of the foul smell. No sooner, however, had they done speaking than he, intermingling broken Russian, Polish, and Yiddish, began to stammer:

"I am going back home soon—to Vilkomir—I have come to Vilna—only for a short while—I am a *melammed* [Bible and Talmud teacher]—"

"Vilkomir—*melammed!*—" it flahed through my mind. "Is he, perhaps, the father of the little boy that is staying with Reb Shlome? They resemble each other to a hair: the same red hair, the same large eyes, the same longish noses. He may have received Reb Shlome's letter and have come to take his boy home."

"What are you babbling?" called the captain, now, through the Jewish incense, not only not propitiated, but even greatly provoked.—"What's this Jew prattling? I don't understand a word of what he's saying. Who has arrested him?"

The two arresters of the Jew stepped up hurriedly.

"We've taken him on Horse Market, he has no passport," reported one of them .

"He can't speak Russian; he speaks half Russian, half Polish, half Yiddish," completed the other officer the report, though he had never got three half bottles of vodka out of one.

The captain threw a contemptuous glance at the prisoner, who, standing with the air of one sentenced to death and looking imploringly toward the angry official, presented a pitiful sight. The young Vilnaers, watching the proceedings, looked into the salon fearfully—doubly so because of what was in store for them and because of the possibility of the examiner's regarding their looking into it, especially at him, as a disrespectful act. Counting upon the same displeasure on his part as the Vilkomir prisoner had provoked, they must have felt like a dentist's patients awaiting in the anteroom their turn to be seated in the dental chair and to get a taste of the torturing forceps; with the only difference that, unlike those patients, the

young men had no prospect of relief after the operation, but of the contrary.

"Send in that Jew there," commanded the captain wrathfully, pointing to me.

This brought my heart into my mouth.

"My turn has now come," I thought excitedly and walked into the salon one short step—just the length of my passport which encouraged me to do so—farther than the Vilkomirer.

In spite of his own perilous situation and his fear in the presence of the official, my fellow prisoner could not help turning toward me and casting at me a furtive look of infinite warmth and pity.

"The poor youth," he must have thought, "is still worse off than I, for he's of military age."

"What does this Jew say?" asked me the captain, pen in hand.

At this question, I drew a deep breath of relief, seeing that I had been called merely for the purpose of interpretation, and that my examination, with all its expected bitterness, had not yet come.

"He says," I replied, "that he's from Vilkomir, and that he has come to Vilna but for a short time."

At the mention of Vilkomir, my fellow sufferer, who, having no idea of my part as an inerpreter, must have thought I was being examined, looked up puzzled.

"What's his name?" went on the examiner.

"What's your name?" I translated into Yiddish.

My question enlightened the prisoner on the matter, and he appeared to feel somewhat relieved by my mediation, as if he were now examined by the severe official, with whom he had not to speak directly, through a partition.

"My name's Feitel Berman," he returned.

"Feitel Berman," I translated without difficulty.

"His father's name?"

"What's the name of your father?"

"Reb Yankel—'Yankel,' I wanted to say—Say, 'Yankelovich,'" the Vilkomirer added quickly, not knowing the gramatical signification of the Russian suffix "ovich," appended to the name of the father to form an adjective for that of the son, and probably remembering having been addressed in Russian "Feitel Yankelovich."

"Yankel," I interpreted to his astonishment.

"Occupation?"

"What's your occupation?"

"I am a *melammed*—say that I teach the children the holy Torah and the laws of God."

By this, the prisoner hoped to dispose the rigorous official favorably toward him.

"Bible teacher," I said briefly.

"Birthplace?"

"Where were you born?"

"In Vilkomir. My father was also—"

"Vilkomir."

"Age?"

"How old are you?"

"Thirty-one years; on the twenty-fifth of Tammuz [the name of a Jewish month] I shall—"

"Thirty-one."

"When arrived?"

"When have you arrived at Vilna?"

"Today."

"Today."

"For what purpose?"

"What was the purpose of your coming to Vilna?"

At this question there was a painful twitching about the unfortunate man's lips; his fear increased visibly, and he hesitated for a while to answer, which did not escape the captains notice. Finally he said he had come to visit some one.

"Whom?" demanded the examiner suspiciously.

"A relative," faltered Reb Feitel undecidedly.

"What's his name?"

This apparently put the prisoner into nameless confusion; and, after some further hesitation, he stammered:

"I've here—my son—a little boy—I wanted—to take him home—Don't say that," he added in great agitation; "he has no *kethavim* [writings, documents]—you understand?"

These words, which fully convinced me that the

arrested man was the father of the little boy in the restaurant, greatly perplexed me. Not to say! What was I to say? How was I to answer the captain's last question? What was I to say if the captain asked me what the Jew, whose last words were too long to be a name of a relative, had told me? In my helplessness, I looked silently at the despairing prisoner, pretending to expect him to continue speaking. But the official's severe and searching look, forboding a violent burst of rage, drove forcibly home to me that another minute's silence on my part would be fatal to both men before him; and, not knowing what else to say, I betrayed the anxious father.

"He has here a little boy," I said remorsefully, "whom he wanted to visit and take home."

"That's his relative, then!" cried the captain in scornful wrath and cast a withering glance at Reb Feitel.

The latter, having apparently seen my betrayal, looked up at me reproachfully.

"Where's his relative staying?" went on the examiner sneeringly.

"Where is your boy staying?" I interpreted, my eyes cast down.

This question completely crushed the poor father, which could be seen in the expression of wild despair in his face. He evidently feared that

the answer to the question would lead to his boy's arrest and confinement in the police jail.

"In a Jewish restaurant—in the Temple court-yard—," he faltered, terrified, apparently careful not to mention Reb Shlome.

"What's the name of the restaurant keeper?"

"Reb Shlome — Shlome," replied Reb Feitel, agonized.

"Has the boy any documents?"

"None," kept the prisoner silent.

"Why has he sent him to Vilna without documents?"

"I've not sent him."

"He has, then, undertaken a journey on his own account, without asking anybody? What mischief had he done at home?"

I translated; but the father said nothing and shrugged his shoulders helplessly.

"Why are you silent?" I asked him, trembling before the examiner's wrathful looks. "Why don't you tell the truth—that your boy wanted to learn a trade here? Shall I tell him that?"

Reb Feitel gave me a look of amazement and was about to say something, when the captain dropped his pen and jumped to his feet in a terrible passion.

"Wait, you rascals!" he burst out thunderingly, by the word "you" probably understanding the Vilkomirer, me, the prisoners in the anteroom, and,

perhaps, also the little boy in the restaurant; "I'll teach you!"

The terror-stricken Vilkomirer was motioned back into the anteroom, where he stationed himself among the other prisoners; while I stood in the salon, vacillating between remaining in it and leaving it, as, by doing either thing, I was likely to act against the wish of the exasperated official. The latter, however, by taking up my passport, decided me to remain.

My examination began, and my heart sank within me. The captain's flaming rage, having consumed Reb Feitel's fat material, was looking for new one, and, in view of my passport, not finding the material with me, found plenty of it in this very fact. In such a frame of mind he plied me severely with all kinds of questions, not forgetting, of course, the railroad station. Against my expectations, however, he finally dismissed me, saying like the gendarme:

"Your luck that you've a passport, else you would be marched off to the police jail."

These words I hardly heard; they were lost upon me in the storm of joy, which had broken over me. In my excitement, I remained in the salon for a while, searching for a few appropriate words of thankfulness for the captain; but an officer stepped up to me and furiously pointed to the exit of the station, resembling a robber who, under threats,

urges a man to flee out of his power. And, like the happy bee, flying with its joyous hum past withered and broken stalks of grass and flowers, I hurried with all the rejoicing of my soul past the broken-hearted Reb Feitel and the dejected Vilna youths and left the station, the guard violently slamming the door after me, the lucky one, like after one ejected.

VIII.

THE RUMBLE OF THE APPROACHING THUNDER-STORM.

On reaching the street, I nearly gave a shout of joy. Quite apart from my recovered freedom, the mere thought that I no longer saw the police station with its unfortunate captives made me feel over-happy; and if the rough police doorkeeper, slamming the door after me, had squeezed in the end of my furcoat, I, by the misfortune of a passportless person! would have preferred using a sharp penknife to opening the door and looking through it. And my poor furcoat? My joy would have healed it as it did my tortured, sickened heart. To crown my happiness, which no rude thought of a possible rearrest in the street dared approach and mar, I had, as is the case with all lucky people, my sycophants about me. The cold benevolently reduced the heat I had brought out of the much heated police station, where I had been standing in my furcoat; the wind blew refreshingly through my hair; and the still falling snowflakes clung coolingly to my hot face, melting for me into tears of joy, of which, in my blissful state, I was so greatly in need. I lacked only a brass band to sound my unusual

luck, so that all Vilnaers stepped to the windows and called to one another:

"Look! look! there comes the luckiest man, who, in the space of only two hours, has twice regained his liberty!"

Self-evidently I felt now the necessity of pouring out my overflowing heart before some one; and who should that some one have been other than Reb Johanan, whom—I was sure he knew of my arrest—it was my duty to quiet about myself, and through whom I had to quiet his eldest son ? When I had Horse Market and German Street behind me, I, therefore, hastened toward Reb Johanan's home, where I found also the ironmonger. How great the anxiety was father and son had been feeling about me—I could not find them in their anxiety to convince myself otherwise of its greatness—, I heard from the cry of joy they uttered at the sight of me.

"Praised be the Lord of the universe! a thousand times praised!" exclaimed Reb Johanan a thousand times and welcomed me most cordially.

"Thanked be God that you've been set at liberty!" called the ironmonger, overhappy; and his only eye, which had the work of two in mirroring his overfilled heart, looked at me with an infinitude of sympathy and joy.

Both rejoiced at my liberation so much that I was near sharing their joy over me as they were

sharing mine. The other members of Reb Johanan's family, who had not been connected with my arrest, also participated heartily in the rejoicing. Reb Johanan's wife, a business woman, made hoarse by arguing with her customers and quarreling with her competitors in Meat Street the whole day, beamed silently with happiness; and, in order to prevent her silence from rendering her sympathy for me questionable, she hoarsely dropped the remark that she was hoarse; his daughter, a tall, pale, and pious girl, thanked God softly and cast furtive glances at the lucky one; and his two younger sons, pious and, at the time of police raids, pale like their sister, exhausted themselves in joyous wondering at my good luck. One of the Talmud students of Chevrah-Torah—Reb Johanan's home was at all times open to them—rose from his seat, dropping his scanty supper, and joined in the jubilation. The door of an adjoining room opened, and a tall, lean woman, the subtenant of this room and the owner of the hosiery store mentioned above, entered. She had heard of my trouble and stepped in to thank God and have a look at the lucky fellow.

As the curiosity of my sympathizers was great and their questions were numerous, I had to detail to them my experiences at the railroad and the police station. All kept silent, listening with rapt attention; only Reb Johanan could not bring him-

self to keep quiet for a moment and repeatedly ejaculated:

"Praised be the Most High that no Jew remained through me in *goyish* [non-Jewish] hands!"

"Yours was the lot of the Jewish nation," remarked the Talmud student when I had finished my story: "the gendarmes were the Egyptians and the policemen the Babylonians."

"And where are the other oppressors of the Jews?" I asked the student "You seem to have forgotten the Romans, to whom the Jews owe their longest sufferings."

As if in answer to my question, the door flew open, and in dashed, deathly pale, a Jew.

"A raid!—The new police master!—The Temple courtyard is surrounded!—They'll soon be here also!—" he gasped and rushed out as quickly as he had rushed in.

The news filled us with consternation. For a moment we stared blankly at one another; then we ran pell-mell. My great joy over my recovered freedom was at one blow gone; and my agitated heart throbbed so violently that, in order to quiet it, I should have had, as it were, to clamp it in one of the vises attached to the working-table in the room.

"What am I to do?" I asked myself in dismay. "To go into the Temple courtyard to my home would mean to deliver myself over with my own

hands to the police, who, in spite of my passport, would again drag me about; to stay here is impossible, for they come here soon, and my stay in a strange house at this hour of the night—it was near midnight—can give them the best reason for arresting and tormenting me; to walk about in the streets so late till the great raid in the Temple courtyard is over is dangerous on account of the police patrols."

The Talmud student, who had no passport, hurried out of the room without saying and having good night, and was, as I afterward learned, soon in the loft of the building, where, huddled in a hiding-place and not only his eyes and his hands, but his whole body lifted up, he fervently prayed to God for protection. The undertenant of the adjoining room, Breine by name, returned into it; and through the open door I soon saw her young son, who, as I was later told, was doing clerical work in the army, put on, in expectation of the raiders, his uniform, a pair of eye-glasses, and a soldierly air, and open a book, which he was ready to pretend to read at the sight of the police. Thereupon the woman woke up her young daughter to calm her about the approaching raid.

"Come, children, quick! I'll lock you in in Breine's store," urged the ironmonger his terrified younger brothers, who, as I subsequently learned, were expecting their papers from the Vilna

city hall; and he ran ahead of them without the key to the store.

"And the key?" called Reb Johanan excitedly in a subdued voice after his eldest son.

"Breine, give the key to your store!" called and ran Reb Johanan's wife and her now doubly pale daughter anxiously into the adjoining room at the same time as if with one mouth and on two legs.

"What are you going to do?" replied Breine in great agitation. "Do you wish to get me and yourselves into trouble? The policemen are walking about everywhere around here—I've just seen one passing with a lantern—; and you can be easily caught in the act of locking the boys in."

"Bene, lie down here," called the pale girl agitatedly to one of her younger brothers, raising the feather beds and the pillows of a bed; "I'll put all this on top of you."

"Leibe, lie down here," croaked the hoarse and fearful mother to the other boy, raising the seat-board of a so-called sleeping-bench; "I'll lie down upon the board above you."

"But here he'll be soon discovered," objected Reb Johanan, distressed and angry.

"Where shall I put the children, then?" wailed the woman, agonized.

Two students from Chevrah-Torah, passportless and frightened to death, entered hurriedly, in the hope of finding some hiding-place with the kind-

hearted Reb Johanan, and, seeing his trouble with his own boys, rushed out in bitter disappointment.

"The raid !—They're coming already !—" warned in an undertone Reb Itzele, the gray-haired sexton of Chevrah-Torah, bursting into the room, which he immediately left.

IX.

THE THUNDER-STORM.

While this was going on in Reb Johanan's house, frightful bustle reigned in the Temple courtyard near by. The anxious activity in the former place, brought on and maintained by that bustle, was, in proportion to it, as insignificant as is the movement of a little wheel in a remote corner of a factory in proportion to the great workings of the machinery. While glad, I am also sorry that I could not be everywhere in the Temple courtyard to see and describe in this chapter from personal observation the interesting scenes that were enacted on that memorable night by the authorities of Vilna. A detailed account of that epochal raid, however, being necessary to the completeness of this narrative, which is more important than its continuity, I feel constrained to leave for a while the narration of my own experiences, in order to give here that account as I gathered it from the reliable and pitiable victims of that raid.

The new chief of police, who, desirous to fill up the measure of his merits about Vilna by a thorough elimination of passportlessness, had caused rigorous inspections to take place in other parts of the city,

had turned, for that night, his special attention to the sacred and the secular buildings of the Temple courtyard; and it was hardly midnight when, accompanied by an extraordinary number of high functionaries, Cossacks, soldiers, and policemen, he advanced toward it. Several Jews living in the neighborhood, having got wind of the approach of the invaders while staying in the Temple courtyard, hurried out of it toward their homes. In their great eagerness to leave it, they would surely have preferred running to walking had it not been for the shame they felt before one another and for the danger of attracting the attention of the raiders. From the fountain in the rear part of the courtyard hastened, alarmed, several belated water-carriers to their patrons in the neigborhood. In their haste, the water in their buckets splashed about violently, pouring upon the pavement; but the carriers did not mind it, bearing the important news of the raid, which was to make up amply for the loss of the water.

The Cossacks soon beset all the exits of the Temple courtyard and, mounted high on their horse-thrones and holding their knout-scepters in their hands, haughtily scoffed before-hand the Jews that were soon to be driven to the police jail. The soldiers beset the exits of the houses and indulged, at the expense of the prisoners that were soon to step tremblingly out of their homes, in stupid and

filthy satirical witticisms, inspired by their malodorous barrack-cabbage. The policemen, most of them equipped with lanterns, set about penetrating the interior of the houses and the many obscure corners of the large courtyard. The policemen's was the black cream of the work—the black cream, which, unlike the usual one, greatly exceeded, in quantity or, rather, in amount, the black milk the Cossacks and the soldiers, confined to guarding outside, enjoyed. And the police officers did their work with fiendish malice, this time happy to display their zealous dutifulness in the presence of their exalted epauleted superiors.

Ivan, the crafty, wicked watchman, who, contrary to my belief and that of Reb Shlome's wife, had already in the evening known of the coming inspection and had been longingly awaiting it, began running about in feverish activity, directing now one policeman, now another where and how to search, and seemed to be the ugly soul of the infamous raid. Only now and then, when it was possible, he did himself the searching for passportless persons, detected unrenewed passports, and arrested—half-rubles.

Silence reigned in the private dwellings of the courtyard in the vicinity of the second gate. Their poor inmates, who lived the night for the toilful day and the day for the restful night, had already found their cheap happiness in quiet, their quiet in

sleep, and their sleep in their wretched beds. Only here and there some one was still sitting up: a poor widow, counting sadly the little money she, crying her goods near the Temple, had laboriously sung together during the day and the evening; a pious storekeeper and Talmudist, who, though fatigued and drowsy, had dared take a plunge into the so-called "sea" of the Talmud to purify and nourish his soul in it, having had no time for such refreshment while attending to his struggling business; or a God-fearing but uneducated water-carrier, who, knowing neither the plain meaning nor the lofty poetry of the Psalms, was playing on David's sweet, soul-outpouring lyre the simple strains of his own heart, sighing over everything, over the loving-kindness of the Lord as well as over the haughtiness of the wicked.

Suddenly violent knocks at the door were heard. On the ceilings, the walls, and the floors of the unlighted or dimly lighted rooms great streaks of light, brought about by the lanterns of the raiders, crossed one another. Those awake, put out their light in their alarm and threw themselves quickly upon their beds; those asleep were awakened and looked, terrified, toward the doors.

"A raid! a raid!" it went, terror-striking, from mouth to mouth, from heart to heart.

"Yosse! Yosse!" pulled a frightened woman her

soundly sleeping husband, "don't you hear how they tear at the door?"

"Yosske! Yosske! a raid!" called a father to his grown-up son in a subdued voice. "Take your papers out, quick!"

"Sleep, Yossele," quieted a mother her infant, whose sleep and peace the brutal intruders had knocked to pieces at the door; "sleep, my child, it's nothing."

"Taube! Taube!" woke a man his soundly sleeping wife, "where's the key to the bureau?"

"Taubke! Taubke!" called a mother to her grown-up daughter, "put a dress on qucikly, they'll soon rummage all the beds."

"Sleep, Taubele," soothed a father his awakened babe, which had burst out crying; "sleep, my child, it's nothing."

But it was something. The blows at the doors became more and more violent, and they had to be opened. The policemen burst into the rooms with their snow-covered boots and let in upon the half-naked inmates a stream of cold, which seemed to issue from their inhuman hearts. The men and the women, unprotected by dress and law, shivered with cold and fear; the little boys learning already the Pentateuch in the *cheder*—Bible school—looked up frightened out of their little beds and gazed curiously at the imaginary Egyptian taskmasters, who had brass buttons on their coats and were

domineering over the Hebrew slaves, their fathers,; the younger children, who took the cold and nervosity-bringing invaders for physicians, broke out into lamentations; and the passportless new-born babies set up terrible cries, as if in fear of being dragged to the police jail after innocently serving so long a term of imprisonment.

"Can you not open forthwith when one knocks at the door?" demanded the uninvited guests wrathfully by way of greeting.

"It takes some time to hide some one," their companions justified the inmates mockingly.

This introduced the inspection. The head policemen, accompanied by their subordinates, stepped from one bed to another, severely demanded passports of the awakened men, and annoyed them, playing the captains or the higher officials, with all manner of empty questions. Some of the disturbed people who, in their sleepiness and confusion, had had the misfortune to retain their skull-caps on their heads in the presence of the capped inspectors, were reminded of their dangerous impropriety by their wives and others, who, speaking Yiddish and wishing to avoid being suspected of saying something secret, passed their hands across their heads to show the meaning of their words.

While this was going on in the sleeping-places, other policemen were searching everywhere else in the houses, leaving no wardrobe unopened and

looking under and behind the furniture. In one of the dwellings the zealous raiders went even to the point of taking a look with their lanterns into a cooled-off oven, and having found nobody in it, searched under it, where there was a long and open space, harboring a hen-family. To do their work thoroughly, they used pokers and broomsticks, which they moved about violently, frightening the fowls and arousing the ire of the rooster which had been soundly sleeping and delightedly laying eggs in his dreams.

After no end of searching and rummaging, examining and investigating, the inspection was at last finished; and the invaders, to the highest pleasure, the greatest joy, and the longest talk of the molested people, stepped out of the houses, leaving the doors as wide open as their hearts were shut tight.

At the same time several policemen left the saloon situated at the second gate of the Temple courtyard. These were, of course, entirely different persons; for they had behaved politely at their examination of the passports, had graciously condescended to drink and eat the gratuitously proffered vodka and luncheon, and had even bidden good night before departing.

The intense life in the synagogues had quieted down. No worshiper was swaying there any longer; no Talmudic sing-song was ringing there. On the

long tallow-soiled tables, covered with folios and prayer-books, only here and there a tallow-candle was dimly burning or, melted in the socket of a tin-candlestick, was flickering; and the tall wax-candles on the reader's desk, burning for the souls of the departed and melting for the tailors, who used to loosen the wax-drippings for their thread, were spreading a dismal glimmer about them. The long wooden benches, which had stood at the tables, had been joined to the praying-seats, forming with them sleeping-places for the young Talmud students, who, by the way, often left the influence of their sleep on the seats, causing many a worshiper in the morning to fall into a doze in the midst of his devotion. But the students, some of whom had expired passports, and some of whom, because of their parents' poverty, had none, were not yet sleeping. Seated near the heated stove, in which, to the envy of some of the poorer boys, potatoes were baking and stale cakes, wetted, rebaking, they were anxiously and softly discussing the possibility of a raid. The police, long before occupying the Temple courtyard, had managed to occupy these young sufferers' minds, arresting and terrifying every thought in them.

"Will they come tonight?" they were asking themselves pale-facedly again and again—a question which, as a kind of mental beast of prey, had during many a night in that winter devoured their peace,

with their peace their sleep, with their sleep their dreams, and with their dreams their nightly sweet reunion with their poverty-tricken yet so dear and loving parents. "Will they come tonight?"

"We have come already," came the answer soon.

It was by far louder than the question the apprehensive students had uttered under their breath; it was thundered at the doors with fist and foot. Terror-stricken, some of the learners hastened to the seat-boxes, in which they kept their scanty belongings, and took out their passports; while others having no papers ran about in dismay or hurriedly dragged mattresses out of cases affixed high to the walls, in the faint hope of taking refuge in simulated sleep.

The doors flew open, and the houses of worship and pious learning filled with cold and profanity, the former defying the warmth-radiating stoves, and the latter the inspiring holiness-radiating Arks of the Law. "Documents! documents!" yelled, conscious of their great power, the head policemen haughtily; and their subordinates, in search of hidden inmates, removed with laughs and curses the tables from their places, separated the benches from their seats, and ordered the cases opened, neglecting in their stupidity to look into the sacred Arks and to arrest the passportless Torah, which, from a Russian legal point of view, was liable to deportation to

heaven as an undesirable alien daring propagate the doctrines of justice and mercy.

With the students also the elderly sextons of the synagogues suffered, who, living inside or outside them, had to be present at the inspections. Divided between the fear of God and that of the inspectors, or, in other words, between the dread of a winter lightning from above and that of a Russian oath or blow from one of the intruders, the poor men now put on their caps—bareheadedness is strictly forbidden in the synagogue—, now put them off, till they finally compromised by cocking them, thus, unfortunately, exposing themselves to the double danger of bringing a lightning upon the bare side of their heads and a terrible oath or blow upon the covered side.

Mindful of the severity of the new police chief's commands, the raiders hardly looked at the passports given them with trembling hands; and all the young students, with or without papers, were soon driven together, lined up, counted repeatedly, and pushed out of the synagogues to go to the police jail. A heart breaking silence, shrieking so loud the anguish of a crushed people, reigned in the emptied houses of God; and mournfully the remaining sextons—ate the deserted overbaked cakes and potatoes.

The above-mentioned Claus, in which Reb Shlome served both God and the people, was likewise

visited. In it studied and lived the highly thought of *perushim,* married young men, who, devoted to the study of the Talmud and supported by a small stipend, were away from their families nearly the whole year, and who divested the synagogue, of which they made profane use, as much of its holiness as it robbed them of their worldliness. Having passports, they had no reason to fear the police. When the latter advanced toward the Temple courtyard, several of the young men had not yet retired to their benches. One was dozing over his open folio, nodding in his peaceful impartiality assent to all the disputing parties of the Talmud and its numerous commentaries alike; another, his head resting on his closed folio, and a rivulet flowing down slowly from his mouth, was soundly sleeping and snoring on all the musical instruments of the last Psalm; a third was sitting on the central platform, dropping the hot tallow of a synagogue candle upon his boot to soften its leather, thus transferring its intended use for the head to the foot; a fourth, standing at the reader's desk, lighted by memorial candles, was writing a letter overbrimming with love and longing for his young wife, whom the beloved lady a few steps away from him, despite her celestial nobility, her costly mantle, and her rich ornaments —the Torah in the Ark, to whom he had consecrated his life, could not replace in his affections. But most of the *perushim* had already gone to "bench";

were quietly dreaming of the coming Passover, for which, as for the Feast of Tabernacles, they used to go home to their families; were sitting in their dreams with their dear ones at the tables spread for the home service of the first Passover evenings; and were overhappy listening to their intelligent little sons asking the prescribed Four Questions.

Poor children! How bitterly disappointed they must have felt at not getting their father's customary answers to their questions! For at that moment the young men were awakened by rough knocks at the door and, instead of saying, in answer to the Four Questions, "We were slaves unto Pharaoh in Egypt," they saw that they were slaves unto the Czar in Russia. The raiders rushed in, ordered the astonished and frightened Talmudists to dress hurriedly, and, since it would have been illegal to arrest them with passports, took the papers away from them. Reb Shlome, who, like the other sextons, had to attend the inspection, dared not, to his deepest sorrow, utter a word in favor of the young men and gave himself great credit for his courage in humbly asking the powerful inspectors graciously to permit the devout theologians to perform, according to the Jewish law, their ablutions before departing; which request, as it concerned religion, was granted.

Had the ceiling been transparent, the pious *perushim,* lifting up their eyes in prayer for rescue,

would have found consolation in fellow sufferers. For at the same time inspections were going on in the little lodging-rooms situated above the Claus; and their inmates went the way of all passportless.

I should also have gone with these lodgers to the police jail had I been at that time with Reb Aaron, the lessee of the rooms, with whom I made my home, and who had received the first of the top waves of the police inundation. The inspector, his suspicion aroused by my unoccupied bed, left in it, while severely examining my frightened landlord as to my whereabouts at midnight, so terrible a police curse that for weeks all sweet dreams kept away from it; but arrest me he did not, as even a Russian police officer cannot arrest an absent man.

There was quiet in the top-floor synagogue situated in the Claus building opposite the lodging-rooms and owned by the jovial and bibulous Chasidim. The last service in it, accompanied by talking, jesting, good-humoredly throwing rolled-up towels at the head of the president of the congregation, running about the room like madmen, gesticulating, and snapping the fingers, had long since been over; and the worshipers, after winding up the noisy evening prayer with merry drinking in an adjoining garret, the Chasidic tippling-place, were gone. There were only two and a half persons there: the sexton, who, lying on a table, was sleeping off the liquor he had drunk out of the bottles while

fetching it for his patrons, and out of the glasses while serving it to them; a Chasid, who, under the wonders of the intoxicant, was thinking of the wonders of his rabbi and humming a Chasidic melody; and his little boy, who, covered with his father's furcoat, was sleeping on a bench near him—a six-year old little Chasid, who went with alacrity to the house of prayer and drink-offering, mingled there with the grown-up persons when tippling was going on, said his *lechaim!*—the Jewish drinking salutation—, and drank out of his father's glass. A passportless student, who was living in the synagogue, was absent; the noise on the stairs of the approaching invaders had caused him to take to his heels. But the Chasid, under the influence of the liquor, hardly took notice of the commotion, fearing as he or his brandy had said to the terrified student, none but God and his rabbi. He was soon, however, to give himself the lie, for at the sight of the police he paled.

"Who has slipped out?" asked the inspector severely of the Chasid, to whom, in his tipsy state, it had not occurred to lock the door behind the student in order to remove the trace of his flight. "Everywhere the doors are locked, and here the door is open."

"I have seen nobody go out," replied the other, thinking anxiously of the student; "the sexton must have forgotten to lock the door."

"Where's the sexton?" asked the officer angrily.

"Here he is," called two policemen, who knew the sexton, and whose hands, stronger than his brandy, had succeeded in awakening him.

"'Have you locked the door before going to sleep?" the inspector now turned to the sexton.

"I can't remember," replied the sexton, upon whom the appearance of the intruders had had a sobering effect, and who forthwith recalled the passportless student, who was nowhere to be seen.

"Do many people sleep here?"

"I sleep here alone."

"And who's this Jew?"

"'He doesn't sleep here."

"Why should I sleep here, in the synagogue," put in the Chasid, in affirmation, "when I've my home?"

"And when you have a home, why are you staying so late there where you are not registered? Show your passport!"

"I've my papers at home," returned the Chasid fearfully; "I'm of this city, I was born in Vilna—"

"But why aren't you there where your passport is?" roared the inspector in a towering passion.

"Me also a little! me also a little!" a child's thin, drowsy voice made itself heard in Yiddish.

It was the sleeping little Chasid, who was attending in his dream a Chasidic drinking-party, and who, wishing also his person considered, demanded his share in his sleep.

"Who's that?" asked the officer, astonished and smiling scornfully.

The policemen, who had not noticed the little boy under the furcoat, stepped up now to him and awakened him. The sight of the uniformed wakers frightened him, and he burst out into tears and the cries of *"Tate! tate!"* [Father!] He got more than the little he had asked for.

"That's my son," explained the Chasid; "he has come with me to the evening service."

"Are you staying here with your whole family?" exclaimed the inspector, enraged. "To the police jail with him!"

"But my boy, I can't leave him here," called the Chasid, the faint note of protest in his voice he dared sound lost in his imploring and lamenting tone.

"Take them both to his home, then," modified the officer his command, "and from there take him to the police jail if he has no papers."

Father and son were taken down; the sexton showed his passport; and the policemen, after thoroughly searching everywhere in the synagogue, went up into the garret, where they looked under the table and the benches and in the—bottles and the glasses.

From the little tippling-place the inspection climbed into the large loft extending along the whole Claus-building and littered with old and broken praying-desks, cases, tables, and benches, to which

clung the shreds of torn youth and life of a past generation. Here the policemen, unaccompanied by their superiors, who thought themselves too high to climb so high, threw, cursing and knocking, the old rubbish asunder and climbed up on the rafters, lighting them up with their lanterns. Despite all diligent searching, however, they did not succeed in finding anybody hidden and were on the point of leaving the loft empty-handed, when suddenly Ivan, the perfidious watchman, appeared on the scene, climbed up on the rafters, raised his lantern, and joyously called down:

"Hither, gentlemen, hither! There, between the two big beams, there"s an excellent hiding-place. Two new students in a synagogue spoke of it last Saturday when I was there to atttend to—they didn't know that I understand Yiddish. Out! down! Hey! who's there?"

The overjoyed raiders hurried toward the caller.

"There must be the Jews that have slipped out of the synagogue below," they thought and likewise yelled: "Out! down! or we drag you down!"

The passportless student from the Chasidic synagogue, who was in the hiding-place designated by the watchman, and saw himself detected and threatened, collapsed with terror. But he soon felt relieved—without drawing the literary "deep breath of relief," as he dared not breathe—when he heard

some one in his vicinity move and make an attempt to climb down.

"Thank God, they don't mean me; another man has also been hiding here and is now descried," he thought and remained as motionless as before.

High above the invaders two little boots came into view and were followed by a patched-up little furcoat and a boy's frightened and tear-stained face. It was the little Vilkomir boy from the restaurant.

Owing to the falseness of the watchman, Reb Shlome had learned of the raid when the Temple courtyard was already beset by the Cossacks; and there had been nothing left for him to do but to take the passportless little stranger to the hiding-place in the loft, which was to him, the sexton of the Claus, well known. And the poor lonely boy, perching high above a synagogue in the dead of night, had not been lonely. Frightful devils, born of the darkness and the silence enveloping him, and the dead, dreadfully enlivening the place, had kept him company—the dead, who, swaying in their shrouds and their praying-shawls, did their devotion in the adjacent Temple throughout the night, and whom, with three raps at the massive portal, the sexton reminded in the morning to make room for the living worshipers. The little boy had also had living human company—the passportless student; but the latter, creeping, falling, and rising among the broken furniture, climbing up nearer and nearer to the little

refugee, and remaining motionless and breathless in his close proximity, had but infinitely enhanced his horror. The devils and the dead, however, too proud to mingle with the Russian policemen or simply afraid of them, had, at the others' approach, soon withdrawn, leaving the Vilkomirer in worse company; and when he had heard the threatening yells of the raiders, he climbed down.

The paltry catch in the shape of a little boy being, of course, far from satisfying the hopes Ivan had aroused in the invaders, they renewed their terrifying cries, which thrilled the luckless student, who had believed himself undetected, to the marrow.

"Now they surely mean me," he thought and also climbed down tremblingly.

The unhappy neighbors in the hiding-place, who had not known of each other before the watchman's arrival, exchanged sad glances.

"Why haven't you come down before when called?" thundered the police officers furiously, clenching their fists.

"I thought you meant him," returned the terrified student in broken Russian, pointing at the Vilkomir boy.

"Here you have it!' replied the officers with tongue and fist; "now you know whom we mean?"

And the poor Talmudist knew it now very well; and, their heads sunk, both prisoners were led out of the loft, where some of the raiders remained to

continue their searching and cursing. And soon there was bitter sighing behind the door of the Chasidic synagogue, where the sobered-up sexton was listening intently; and at the window of the unlighted little restaurant, through which Reb Shlome and his wife cast agonized looks after their carried-off protégé in the patched-up little furcoat.

X.

STEALING INTO THE HANDS OF THE CAPTOR.

When Reb Johanan"s younger sons had finally been well hidden away, the attention of all my sympathizers turned to me. Reb Johanan and his eldest son held a whispered and anxious consultation as to what to do with me. The same did the locksmith's wife with her neighbor, Breine, while the former's daughter looked excitedly through the window to see whether the large lanterns were already approaching. My situation was critical, indeed. Whether I remained in the house or left it, I was in danger of falling again into the hands of the police; and to hide myself there somewhere was out of the question, as detection could get me and the good people into great trouble.

Suddenly a happy idea flashed through Reb Johanan's mind.

"Come!" he said to me resolutely; "don't fear anything; *I* lead you! We steal, in case the Cossacks don't stand there any longer, through Jewish Street into the narrow passage between the Temple and the bath-house; and from there you've but a few steps to the Claus-building, where your home is. Your lodging and the passage must doubtless have

been searched already by the police; and, should they, God forbid, espy us, the danger wouldn't by far be so great as it's here, for you could say you were going home. Besides, I've many acquaintances among the policemen, and, when you go with me, you mustn't fear in the least. Come," he concluded encouragingly, *"I* lead you!"

Seeing no better way out of my trouble, I took Reb Johanan's advice, and we left his house. Shaking with fear and walking slowly and cautiously, we soon passed the narrow Chevrah-Torah alley and caught sight of Jewish Street. Here there were no Cossacks, and everything seemed to have quieted down, while in the place intervening between the alley and the street profound silence prevailed. Instead of crossing this place straight, we noiselessly hugged the houses fronting it until we reached the street, from which, our hearts throbbing audibly, we hurriedly slipped into the designated passage.

Unfortunately, the passage was entirely dug up, new wooden pipes for the water-supply of the Jewish bath-house being laid in place of the old and rotted ones. Only a very narrow and slippery path, which hardly afforded room for two feet placed side by side, and which ran along the Temple wall, had been left. Reb Johanan, who was familiar with the now pitch-dark passage, led the way; and I, holding on to him, followed him. To my dread of the police had now been added my fear of slipping, by a mis-

step, into the deep ditch and joining prematurely the gruesome nocturnal worshipers behind the Temple wall. The hope of gaining my lodging soon, however, prevented me from losing my composure, and I slowly moved on after my guide.

Finally the dangerous path was behind us. We stood in the courtyard. What I had to do now was to turn to the left, to pass cautiously a distance of about twenty steps, and to steal through the above-mentioned portico into the Claus-building. I looked about and tiptoed onward. In mortal fear I reached the portico and remained motionless in the recess of a wall. Here I listened keenly for any one going or speaking, but everything was quiet about me. Some noise of words and steps fell upon my ear, but this proceeded from a remote synagogue. Seeing my way clear, I left the recess and was about to slip into the building, when a strong hand grabbed me from behind and literally lifted me up.

"Come, Reb Jew," I heard at the same time my captor say scornfully behind me in Yiddish; "come, we need you."

For a moment I stood petrified with terror; and, when I recovered myself and looked backward, I saw, to my great mortification, Ivan, the watchman. For my audacity of looking back and not following his command immediately, he gathered up in his hand the collar of my furcoat with such force that I could not turn my head backward any longer.

"What do you want with me?" I protested in a subdued voice, looking, on account of my collar, ahead instead of facing my captor. "You know me; this evening, when you drank your tea in the restaurant, we talked together. You know that I've a passport—here it is, you can see it.—Reb Johanan! Reb Johanan! He also knows me—"

But Reb Johanan, who had remained on the brink of the ditch, looking in great anxiety after me, had already lost his courage and was retracing his steps homeward, no doubt, bitterly reproaching himself for having delivered me with his own hands to the police. Ivan, though he had recognized me by the light of his lantern, did not deign to answer me, nor did he relax his hold upon my collar; and I, half pushed, half carried, went onward in front of him. Both my drink-money and his promise to me of a restful night had been altogether forgotten by him. The vile watchman, who daily swept the vast court-yard of its dirt, never thought of sweeping his dirty little heart.

XI.

IN THE PRESENCE OF THE POLICE ALMIGHTY.

"Hey! hey!" Ivan called to two policemen standing at some distance, "look, I've another 'pike,' a young Itzig-Pitzig!"

The policemen came running up and received me with extended — feet, with which they painfully kicked me. Thereupon they took me to the stair-door of a synagogue situated on the first floor of a building in the Temple courtyard and called "The Gaon's Claus."

"What do you want with me in this synagogue?" I felt urged to ask my convoy, but kept quiet, as, in answering me, they would surely have talked with their hands and also, what other people seldom do, with their feet.

The stairway was occupied from top to bottom by police officers. One of them, in a rage that could set twenty kicking police feet in motion, seized me, like the watchman, from behind by my collar and pushed me up the stairs and into the synagogue. Here it was quite dark. In a corner of the synagogue dim candle light was seen, which proceeded from an adjoining room. Into this room I was taken.

As I entered it, a very remarkable sight presented itself to my gaze. At the dusty walls of the not large room stood old, groaning bedsteads, on which lay ripped-up matresses. On the latter were sitting, bare-headed and half-naked, haggard and shrunken old men, whose minds, from lifelong swimming through the divine, refreshing waters of the "sea of the Talmud," were still vigorous, but whose bodies, unable to follow their minds, had always remained at its shore, drying and withering there, even in youth, from want and misery. They had all been roused from their sleep and were passing their bony hands across their bodies in torn shirts of dubious cleanness. Benches, praying-desks, and also a part of the unswept floor were littered with soiled and ragged articles of clothing. On a table, beside closed worn folios and tallow-covered tin candlesticks, and on the uncleaned window-sills stood unwashed pots, which contained spoons and soup-leavings of the old men's last supper, sent to them from charitable houses. At a wall hung a tin tank of water, bent out of shape and fitted with a faucet, from which the water dripped with measured noise into a filthy basin.

And in the midst of this wretched and squalid life was glittering, like golden sunshine in a puddle, the majestic appearance of gorgeously uniformed high officials, with their gold-interwoven epaulets and long swords. Nearly all the civil and military

authorities of Vilna, headed by the tall, military, and imposing form of the pale and serious-looking new chief of police—he had evidently invited them to show them the results of his great activity—, were gathered in the room. Bloody and domineering Russianism with its outward splendor had been juxtaposed with noble and oppressed Judaism and its outward squalor, into which the former had plunged it. In the countenances of the high dignitaries, however, I noticed no trace of malice or scorn, which, in the presence of the order-loving police chief, would, to be sure, have been out of place. I, on the contrary, saw in their faces an expression of deep earnest bordering on pity, to which the sad insight into the distressful life of the Jews, afforded them by their visit to the synagogue, might have disposed them.

The eyes of all present soon turned upon me. A police attendant, who had reverently been standing at the door, took my passport from me, which was handed to the chief of police. The latter cast a searching look at me, which struck renewed terror to my tortured heart. Two other attendants stepped up to me to examine the special identification marks in my passport; and while one of them measured my height with his eye, the other looked into my eyes to ascertain their color. Then, comparing my given age with the growth of my young beard, they both pulled at its little hairs; but, in the presence of the

illustrious assembly, they did the pulling softly, so that only my soul was pained.

"Where have they arrested him?" asked the police chief.

"Near the Temple, past which he had slowly and cautiously been stealing," reported a voice at the door respectfully.

"This must be investigated," said the other without looking at any one of his entourage; "let them take him away!"

XII.

FREEDOM'S FUNERAL.

At the last words of the police chief, I felt the gentle hand of a policeman on me, and I was taken out and down. At the stair-door two policemen took charge of me, and I crossed with them the Temple courtyard, at which I threw sorrowful parting looks. The two tiny little, alike-looking police attendants that had stationed themselves in the pupils of my eyes when the officer looked into the latter to find out their color, must already have left them; else my looks would not have had their way.

When, nearing Jewish Street, I looked up toward Remailes Claus, which I had visited a few hours before, a thrill of anguish shot through my heart. The entrance to that *yeshivah* was beset by soldiers; an inspection was going on in it. I pictured to myself the sufferings the poor terrified children were undergoing through the raid; and the thought of my possible meeting them in the police jail filled me with shame.

I was, however, to face them sooner; for my convoy took me to the besieged entrance, from where I was to accompany the little prisoners to the jail. The armed soldiers, on catching sight of me, burst

into scornful laughter and let loose upon me all the horsepower of their witticisms. From above fell upon my ear the heavy trample of the brutal policemen, accompanied by the light footsteps of the unfortunate little boys. The poor children seemed quite helpless in the power of the raiders, whom neither the miracles of the little rabbi, the screaming dead, nor the intimate wild ox had managed to drive off.

The footsteps soon began to come nearer and nearer; and on the stairs, trembling with fear, appeared the little Talmud students. At the sight of them I felt tempted to hide myself. It was especially hard for me to face the forward little Keidani boy, arrested in spite of his boasted "passport," who had so boldly berated me for belittling the danger of arrest before his comrades.

When the children had left the building, they and I were lined up and counted. The way of this counting I shall never forget, for I felt it as well as I heard it. The utterance of each number came simultaneously with a heavy blow upon the back of the one counted. I, as the eldest of the prisoners, received the first buffet, which the counter and beater dealt to me with such malice that when he said "One" and gave me one I was inclined to believe that the number referred, not to my person, but to the blow, which I thought would be followed by more counted blows for me. Despite the fact, however, that the

numbers referred to the persons, our backs felt the kind police hand more than once; for, our number being found in a fashion so pleasant to the heroic raiders, it is self-evident that they counted us repeatedly.

The numeration over, we set out, the painful blows in our backs and a poignant protesting woe in our hearts, for the police jail, passed Jewish Street, and turned into German Street. Here, to enhance our misery, lively dance music sounded forth from one of the houses. Heavenly music moved the feet of the blissful dancers; Russian tyranny, those of the hapless prisoners.

We soon stood before the great police building. A large gate opened, and a broad flight of stairs led us up into a dimly lighted corridor, running between two rows of numbered cells. From the latter issued a frightful uproar, which made me feel as if I were standing in a menagerie between two rows of caged wild beasts. Here our guard counted us again to ascertain that none of us had been lost on the way, and handed us over to the jail-keeper, an elderly, thickset fellow, with gray eyes, a wide mouth, and a huge mustache. He wore a short furcoat, tightened with a belt, from which hung a bunch of keys on his right side and a terrific knout on his left.

"Thirty-five *pieces*," complacently reported one of the counters.

"With this big one?" asked the jailer, casting a rageful look at me.

The policemen answered in the affirmative; and the turnkey unlocked a door marked No. 7, opened it, seized me from behind, struck me excruciatingly with his fist on the back of my neck, and hurled me like a log into the cell. Not in the least faring better, my poor little fellow prisoners followed me; and the door closed behind us. . . .

XIII.

HELL IN A CELL.

It was only with great difficulty that I rose from the floor, upon which the ferocious jailer had flung me. My neck ached violently, my head was in a whirl. Black, impenetrable darkness reigned about me. A few light-fingered boys, sitting, as I afterward learned, at the wall opposite the door and enjoying the rights of regular patrons of the jail, swore and raged terribly at the newcomers. Many Talmud students from the Temple courtyard, who had occupied most of the space in the cell before my arrival, sighed and groaned and enlarged upon the raid. The little inmates of Remailes Claus groped about lamentingly in the darkness and anxiously called their comrades and their friends. All kinds of voices called promiscuously about me:

"Out with you! All are brought into our cell!" "Alas, what am I to do now? Who shall write for me to my father that I'm in jail?" "Where are you, little Kovnoer?" "Eishishkier, Rumshishkier, Slonimer, where are you?" "Soon we shall have all Vilna here! Begone! begone!" "Here I am, Swentzianier!" "Look out, Keidanier! something's standing here." "Why are you climbing upon me?"

"The policeman found me behind the wood pile." "Come here, here's some room." "Wait, we'll give it to you! Couldn't you go into another cell?"

And through all this darkness and hubbub, as if taking advantage of them, stole to every nose the offensive emanations from an unmentionable—to use a known expression—"vessel full of shame and reproach."

I stood in the midst of this chaos. My repeated efforts to reach a wall failed; wherever I stepped, I bumped against some one. To my one question whether there were benches in the room, I received from the people crowding about me, each of whom thinking my query had been directed to him, so great a number of negative answers that they could put a bench out of existence had there been one.

A half hour may have passed when the door opened, and a new company of prisoners was hurled in. A terrible jam ensued. The thievish boys became infuriated. Every one that had the misfortune of coming, through the press, near them, was violently thrust back into it. Cries of pain rang through the cell. "My hand!" "My foot!" "My back!" voices wailed everywhere.

And again the door opened, and another collection of prisoners, which, for lack of space, could not be hurled in, was crammed in. We were near suffocating, but did not do so; we were too curious to know how all this would end.

The latest addition to our number brought the light-fingered prisoners to their feet.

"Turnkey! turnkey! bring the night-lamp!" they yelled at the top of their lungs, stamping with rage. "They're climbing upon us, the rascals; we've no breathing-space any longer. Give the night-lamp! the night-lamp give! or we beat them all so that the devil takes them!"

The dull sound of blows, followed by lamentations and subdued protests, was soon heard.

"Yoss-ke! Yoss-ke!" ejaculated some one near me in the midst of the tumult in a voice that struck me as familiar, and in a tone that expressed such wrath and agony that, for a while, I was paralyzed with terror.

At the same moment several prisoners hit against my sides and my face, and I soon heard the voice of the agitated man, who had forced his way through the crush, from some distance.

"Yosske!" he cried again breathlessly, "you're here—in the police jail?—Where are you, *shegetz* [rascal]?—Wait, I'll give it to you!—Where are you?—Yosske, where are you?—Who's beating you?—Wait, you *shegetz!*—To run away from a father!—not to ask a father!—Beat him, the *shegetz!*—give it to him!—"

The last words, referring to a run-away son, made me immediately recognize the voice, changed as it sounded through high pitch and great excite-

ment, as that of Reb Feitel and broke my heart.

"Both father and son are in the police jail, then," I thought to myself, deeply grieved; while the young thieves, mimicking Reb Feitel, repeatedly yelled:

"Beat him, the *shegetz!*—give it to him!—"

"Here he is!" interrupted himself one of the mockers, seizing at random one of the little Talmud students. "To run away from a father!—not to ask a father!—"

"That's not my father," protested the little boy, tears and terror in his voice; "my father—peace be with him!—had a different voice—I'm a Janovaer —My father—peace be with him!—has recently died—I say *kaddish* [a mourner's prayer]—"

"Yosske, answer me!" resumed the father in exasperation, "or I'll beat you blue and brown! Why have you run away from home, you troubler of Israel? Why have you plunged me into misfortune?—Where are you?"

"Here I am, *tate* [father]," came the determined answer from the little Vilkomirer finally, "here I am; I'm standing beside you—You can hit me if you like—for my part, hit me—You know why I've run away—"

Heart-rending sobs followed these words.

"But why didn't you want to study?" wailed the father, "why didn't you want to serve God? A craftsman he wants to be! Goes alone to Vilna!—Have you ever heard of such a thing? Now you

have it, you troubler of Israel! It serves you right, I'm glad of it! Now they'll drag you about—they'll drag you and me by étape. A great joy for your mother!—"

At the mention of the mother the sobs of the little boy became intenser and louder. The thievish rulers of the cell had in the meantime resumed their yells for night-lamp; and the turnkey, who, during their former racket, must have been busy overcrowding the other cells, threw open the door violently.

"Silence, vagabonds!" he roared furiously, "I'll —Here's a night-lamp, rascals—There shall forthwith be money for vodka!"

Saying which, he lighted—with his burning rage, I think—a little lamp, placed it upon a little shelf near the door, and hurried off to restore order somewhere else.

XIV.

IN THE LIGHT OF A JAIL NIGHT-LAMP.

Dim as the light of the little lamp was, it had succeeded in banishing from the room the Russian Egyptian darkness and was to us the miserable sunshine that had followed the thunder-storm of the young thieves, of Reb Feitel, and of the turnkey. In addition to the senses of hearing and of smell, I could now exercise also that of sight, which, it seemed to me, enabled me to hear and smell now better than before, as if the lamp lighted the wandering distressful noises and the foul odors to their destination—the ear and the nose.

I had, however, very little attention for things heard and smelled; I was absorbed in the contemplation of the rare scene in the cell. The pathetic misery about me and the wretched jail-light, in which it had revealed itself to me, were worthy of each other. Wherever I looked, I saw drowsy, sorrowful faces. The postures in which the prisoners found themselves were manifold: one was standing in the centre of the room, in the midst of the jam, which the night-lamp had somewhat relieved; another, his head sunk, was leaning against one of the walls; a third, who, unable to stand any longer, had

tried to let himself down upon the floor, was now, for lack of strength and space, in a position between standing and sitting; a fourth was sitting on the ground, carefully watching his outstretched legs that nobody might tread upon them. Reb Feitel, totally broken by the sufferings he had undergone during his captivity, had also let himself down upon the floor and was now, with a mingled expression of anger, pity, and love in his face, looking up at his son, who was standing beside him, and whose tearful eyes shone in the light of the lamp. The young thieves, three ragged wretches, were seated on a log, looking, though used to jail and a dominant power in it, worn and unhappy. They seemed to me the most pitiable of all the prisoners in the cell, having been robbed of their honesty by the very thieves that had taught them to steal, and of their gentleness by the brutal turnkeys, with whom they were in frequent contact.

Among the Talmud students from the Temple courtyard, a considerable number of whom had been assigned to No. 7, I saw several of the Chevrah-Torah *yeshivah,* among them also the Smorgon student, who, in the evening, had so greatly rejoiced in the receipt of his passport.

"You, with your passport, are also here!" I was about to commiserate him, when some one tapped my shoulder from behind.

I turned around and blushed to see the forward

little Keidani boy, who looked me triumphantly in the face.

"Who was right," he asked me to my great embarrassment, "my father or you?"

I was on the point of saying something in my justification, when I was again prevented from speaking.

"And how do you, lucky fellow, come here?" asked me one of my fellow prisoners from Horse Market, who had envied me my liberation so much.

"Well, where's your answer?" asked me the Keidanier again; "who was right, my father or you?"

"Leave this man alone, Keidanier," interposed one of my little cell-mates; "it's very mean of you to mock at him with your questions while both of you are in the police jail."

"I understand you well, Janovaer," struck back the Keidani boy, greatly offended; "I understand you better than the policemen understood you at the raid. None of us, except one," he went on, turning to me, "knows more than a few scraps of the Russian language. When the policemen asked us questions, some of us kept silent, and others stammered the Russian scraps they knew. But the Janovaer, who knows nothing of Russian, unhesitatingly spoke Yiddish to them. 'I'm a Janovaer and have a letter of recommendation from the Janovaer *rosh-haye-shivah*' [the principal of the yeshivah], he said to

them and showed them the letter. 'Shive!' the policemen mimicked him, 'shive!' I think that only a fool could show a Hebrew writing to police officers."

"Not knowing Russian, how could you obey the orders of the policemen?" I asked the Keidanier, trying to nip in the bud a quarrel between the two little boys. "The one boy among you that knows Russian must have been too busy with himself to act as an interpreter between you and the raiders."

"We had a *Goyish* interpreter," replied one of the little students, "the Haman of the Temple courtyard. He frightened us to death, the accursed Amalekite. 'Put on your rags and go to the police jail,' he yelled in Yiddish; 'there you'll enjoy yourselves for two weeks. Abraham, David, Mintzker, Pintzker, Hotzeplotzer, Itzig, Pitzig, put on your rags! Quick! quick!' "

"If the merit of our holy Torah hasn't saved us from arrest," I heard some one say behind me, "it ought at least to inflict severe punishment upon the cruel watchman, who dares treat Jewish chlidren in that way while making a living from Jews."

I turned around and recognized in the speaker the God-trusting little Vitebsk boy, whom I had first met on entering Remailes Claus.

"I can't understand," I said to him, "why the merit of our holy Torah hasn't prevented the imprisonment of you and your comrades."

"The merit of our holy Torah," returned the pious

little student, "probably doesn't help those violating its laws."

"I can't see how little boys like you, studying the Talmud the whole day, can ever break a law of the Torah."

"We're liable to sin like anybody else. Last Sabbath, I confess, walking in German Street, I felt a coin in my pocket, which I had forgotten to remove on Friday; and, instead of remaining on the spot till nightfall to avoid carrying the coin on the Sabbath, I walked home with it in my pocket. May God pardon me! I should have fasted half a day last Monday without that coin."

"He deserves a grievous punishment, the watchman," said one of the little prisoners; "he's a terrible hater of Israel."

"He hates Israel," remarked another little student bitterly, "but likes Israel's Sabbath puddings all right. May a lamentation enter his belly! May the Jewish Sabbath dishes he devours in the Temple courtyard have the same effect upon his belly as had the priest's bitter water, drunk by the adulterous woman in the sanctuary, upon her belly! May he—"

The further curses of the vindictive little boy were lost in a fresh racket, raised by the thievish youths and evidently intended to draw the attention of all others to them. They soon assumed the important air of police inspectors and, conscious of their power, summoned before them all other prisoners.

"Give an account of yourself," one of the thieves ordered a prisoner, who was the first to follow their summons.

"If you have no passport," said another of them in a serious tone, "the statement of your name and your residence is sufficient. "

The prisoner obeyed.

"Now you can give your money," said the third thief; we need it for buying vodka for the turnkey."

"I have no money," replied the prisoner and was about to withdraw; but the thieves, without repeating their demand, went straight to his pockets, took out his money, and pushed him aside.

Now my turn came. Profiting by the experience of my predecessor, I, without waiting for an order from the "inspectors," gave my name and my lodging place and handed over to them my pocket-book, which I had had in readiness, and from which I had wisely removed some coins. My alacrity in complying with their wishes evoked their praise for me; and one of them produced a note-book, in which he entered my name, thus enrolling me, as he said, as an honorary member of their society. I was, of course, the envy of my honest cell-mates; for they, unlike me, failed to see that while one of the young thieves put my name into his note-book another put his hand into my pocket. But the latter found nothing in it; and I was on the point of apologizing to him for his unsuccessfulness in my

pocket and of thanking his companion for the honor bestowed upon me, when the attention of the thievish trio turned to the little students of Remailes Claus.

They had to station themselves in a semi-circle and to give their names. As they had but names and no money, the rulers of the cell flew into a passion. One of them, a tall, pock-marked lad, who might have studied the Talmud once and gone wrong on realizing too late that there was no future for him in that study, struck up a Talmudic melody, to the tune of which his comrades turned and twisted the ears of the little boys. As the text of his melody the singer had chosen the words "The rabbis taught," which often occur in the Talmud, and which he repeated numerous times with each boy; and the longer the rabbis taught, the louder screamed the children.

At this new tumult, the door again flew open, and in rushed the turnkey. His appearance was dreadful. His whole body shook with rage; his eyes rolled; his upper lip with its large mustache moved up and down; his right hand convulsively pressed his knout.

"Silence, vagabonds!" he thundered, gnashing his teeth, and, looking in all directions, raised his knout.

Unspeakable terror seized us. Like sheep before the tearing wolf, we pressed against one another and against the walls, forming on both sides of the

furious jail-keeper a compressed, contorted, and terrified mass of humanity. The knout began to dance about. One was struck on his head, another on his legs, a third on his back, a fourth on his shoulder, and so on; so that, considering all the knouted parts of the human body in the cell, we had among us a man thoroughly beaten up. The lion's share fell to the thieves.

"Silence!" roared the turnkey again, thrusting with satisfaction the knout into his belt, and hurried out, slamming the door behind him.

XV.

A JAILBIRD'S SERMONS.

The violent slam with which the cruel keeper closed the door of our cell recalled to me the author of immoral literature in one of Krilof's Russian fables. Tortured in a heated infernal caldron, he complains of the long duration of his sufferings, outlasting those of other sinners in hell; but one of the raging goddesses of vengeance silences him by pointing out to him the pernicious effect of his work upon posterity and then furiously slamming the lid upon the caldron. Like that terrified author, we now kept silent. The little boys, their noiseless tears flowing fearlessly, repressed their sobs. The grown-up prisoners subdued their groans and passed their hands across the sore places in their bodies. Some of my cell-mates, their faces distorted with pain, raised their feet, which had been trodden upon during the terrible presence of the knout, and, whistling softly, pressed them gently with their right thumbs.

On the log, however, there was great cheerfulness. The young thieves, heartily laughing, discussed the received blows, compared them with those they had received on the preceding day, and cracked

jokes at the expense of the turnkey. Like cold compresses, producing, not cold, but warmth, the beating, instead of depressing them, had put them into the best of humor. The pock-marked lad, whom the jail-keeper had knouted into special hilarity, struck up, in derision of the students, a Talmudic melody again, which, coming from some preacher, easily led him to the idea of reciting the familiar parodies on the Kelm preacher, then noted in Russia for his terror-striking depicton of hell.

"Sha! sha! [Silence!] listen to a sermon," he called, blew his nose and cleared his throat several times after the fashion of the Russian-Jewish preachers, and, in the tone and the melody of the Kelm orator, began to prove the existence of hell.

"Listen, Jews," he sang. "How can one doubt that there's hell? Hell has innumerable departments, each department has countless spaces, each space has numberless *malache-chabbalah* [angels of destruction], each *malach-chabbalah* has untold numbers of serpents, each serpent has immeasurable quantities of poison. Now, if there were no hell, of what use would be so many departments, so many spaces, so many *malache-chabbalah,* so many serpents, and so much poison?

"Also to you women I've something to say," the parodist went on singingly, lifting up his eyes, as if addressing the women sitting in the synagogue gallery.

"There was a rabbi's wife. She was godless and sold swine-fat for kosher [ritually prepared] fat. But when she died, the earth wouldn't take her; a day after her burial she was found lying on the ground. Seeing this, the people went to the rabbi. 'Rabbi, Rabbi,' they announced, 'your wife's lying on the ground; the earth refuses to take her.' 'Throw her to the dogs, then,' said the rabbi. They threw her to the dogs, but even the dogs wouldn't eat the wicked woman. 'Rabbi, Rabbi,' the people again announced, 'the dogs refuse to eat your wife.' 'Throw her to the wolves, then,' said the rabbi, They threw her to the wolves, but even the wolves wouldn't tear her. Rabbi, Rabbi,' the people again announced, 'the wolves refuse to tear your wife.' 'Throw her to the swine, then,' said the rabbi. They threw her to the swine, but even the swine wouldn't devour her. Rabbi, Rabbi,' the people again announced, 'the swine refuse to devour your wife.' 'Let her lie on the ground, then,' said the rabbi; 'there's no help for so sinful a woman.'— But you women," concluded the lad, "if you'll be pious, will not share her fate; the earth will take you, the dogs will eat you, the wolves will tear you, and the swine will devour you."

With this, the sermon was finished. But it was of no benefit whatever to me; for, being in the police jail, I could not have entertained the slightest doubt as to the existence of hell; and the story

about the impious woman seemed to me fishy, since the rabbi, before giving up his wife altogether, did not also think of throwing her first to the brutal Russian policemen and the turnkeys. Besides, I was hardly in the mood to be edified by a sermon. It was already late in the night. My head, missing sleep, pained me above; and my legs, hardly able to support me, pained me beneath. And my heart? —Alas! they were cruel, the poor prisoners, more cruel than the turnkey; for while he had beaten many in various places, they beat one in the same place—me in my heart. They beat me with their beaten backs and sides, with their groans, their tears, and their mournful looks.

The heart-rending sounds at last began to quiet down. One after another the poor worn prisoners let themselves down upon the wet and filthy floor, where sleep or half-sleep, lending laxity to their bodies, made the compact mass still more solid. Only I, towering brokenly above the melancholy heap of misery, remained on my feet. I could by no means bring myself to sit down upon the dirty floor and determined to stand through the night on my legs, though they were bending already beneath their load.

Sleep, however, finally took pity also on me; and when, awakened by a violent pain in my limbs, I opened my eyes, I was astonished to find myself, against my determination, sitting on the ground.

"God protect you!" I heard suddenly behind me Reb Feitel, whom I had not expected to sit near me, say to his boy. "If you give up study, you'll become a good-for-nothing, a disturber of Israel like the young man that didn't scruple in the evening to tell the captain of your stay in Viina."

"Lucky that he does not recognize me," I thought, ashamed, lifted with great difficulty my aching back from his knee, and transferred it for support to that of another man.

Suddenly a new light flashed up in the cell. I looked up toward the lads on the log and saw one of them lighting waxen Hanukkah-candles, sticking to the boot of a sleeping prisoner. The holy candles, recalling the most splendid Maccabean fight for liberty, were being lighted in a jail, casting their gleam upon the crushed decendants of the immortal Maccabean heroes. Feeling at home in the jail, the thievish youths seemed not to think yet of sleep, but continued their mischief indefatigably, though noiselessly.

The sacred candles, however, burned but a while; and when they had gone out, the profane little night-lamp could not bring itself to outlast them and also went out. Reb Feitel left off talking to his son. Soon also the three thieves became quiet, leaving for the rest of the night their reign in the cell to another trio: darkness, silence, and sleep.

XVI.

DAYLIGHT, FRESH AIR, AND HOPE.

Poor Morpheus! How hard must he have been toiling about me during my sleep, preceded by so many shocking events! I pity him the more because I was not in a position fully to appreciate his magical and fantastic imagery, with which he had been crowding my brain in dreamland that night, and which had been so full of enchanted policemen, straw matresses, blows, tea, railroad stations, thieves, restaurants, knouts, night-lamps, etc. For, when I awoke in the morning, all these images, in their details, had left my memory. Only one of the winged little boys of the dream-god, surprised by my sudden awakening and deserted by his comrades, who had already returned to the underworld, remained in my head like a bird caught in a net. This was the dream in which I had been addressing the turnkey in most flattering terms, pressing his hand with all the warmth of my heart.

On waking after that dream, I was still holding the hand in mine; for it was not that of the jailer, but my own benumbed hand, which, in the jam, had got into my right hand and had helped the formation of my strange dream. Holding my hand

and having behaved so friendly toward the turnkey, I could not but say a few kind words also to myself.

"Good morning, my friend," I greeted myself, pressing my hand warmly and smiling bitterly. "How are you getting along here? Have you not yet suffocated in this jail? Have you still all your limbs? I am sincerely sympathizing with you, my poor friend. You look quite broken to pieces, and your hand—how cold and bloodless it is! What crime have you committed that they put you into this chamber of torture? Are you a Russian turnkey or a Russian chief of police that you are lying here?"

Scarcely had I finished thinking these words, when my support, the above mentioned knee of a prisoner, moved sideward, and I fell backward. The disgraceful fall irritated me so much that I felt tempted to cast a resentful look at the owner of the knee, who had dared move it. Not seeing another support at my disposal, I rose from the floor, and my example was followed by the grown-up prisoners. After them rose also the little students and looked fearfully toward the comfortably stretched-out and sleeping young thieves. The compressed mass on the ground was soon dissolved; and sleepy, sullied, languid, broken, and anxious human beings, pressing against one another, began to move about in the room. Reb Feitel has also risen and was looking with his boy gloomily into the growing day. Soon

the thieves also awoke and announced that all would shortly go out na *voẓdukh*—for an airing—, of which, near fainting in the pestilential air, we stood very sorely in need.

The door, indeed, soon opened, and the turnkey yelled hoarsly, wrathfully—he evidently begrudged us our relief—, and commandingly, *"Na voẓdukh!"* The cold air streaming in from the corridor afforded us a sweet foretaste of the refreshment awaiting us in the open; and we hurried out toward the stairs in glad obedience to the jailer's command. At the same time great numbers of other half-suffocated prisoners, likewise going for an airing, were leaving their cells on both sides of the long corridor; for the raid had not been confined to the Temple court-yard and its environs, but had been extended to the whole third precinct, in which it was situated.

We all descended the stairs and entered the carefully locked jail-yard. Here, the yard, thank Heaven, being entirely open on one side—overhead, we freely drank in the refreshing frosty air, which, with the thunder of the cloud giving rain to the earth, the grudging and wrathful turnkey had granted us. Unfortunately, however, we had to exhale at the same time all the foul air that had been accumulating in our lungs during the past night; and the pure air of the yard was very much in danger of being befouled, as it often happens to the air of overcrowded parks, and as the case would

be in paradise now had not God in his wisdom driven the first couple out of it.

Refreshed, the prisoners were ordered back into the cells. I chanced to be transferred to a cell with a window looking out into the jail-yard. After being emptied for a while, the yard was filled again with a great crowd, admitted through a back-gate and composed, as I afterward learned, of the prisoners' relatives and friends. Some of the visitors had come to inquire after the health of the unfortunates; others, to advise with them about the steps to be taken for their release; and still others had brought phylacteries and breakfast for them, their appetites having been arrested together with them. All raised their heads and looked up to the windows, hoping to descry familiar faces at them. The upward looks were soon accompanied by upward sounds. "Berke!" "Leibke!" "Itzke!" "Gershke!" the visitors called up—names quivering with deep anxiety and affection and seeming animated sound-beings: little sound-Berkes, sound-Leibkes, etc., flying upward to deliver to the sufferers messages of sympathy, love, and hope.

I looked sadly down into the commotion below. No gladdening message came up from it for me. In vain did I prick my ears, listening for my name; in vain did I strain my eyes, searching for some familiar face;—all remained strange and unsympathetic to me.

"God," I called up to an acquaintance above, seeing that no acquaintance called up to me from below: "God, shall I have to languish here long yet?"

As if in answer to my plaint, I suddenly heard my name called. I looked down and was overjoyed to see Reb Johanan, his wife, and their eldest son. Like the others for their relatives and friends, they had brought for me sympathy, hope, phylacteries, and breakfast, and were searching at the windows to deliver them to me. The first two things I received when they had caught sight of me.

"Don't worry!" they repeatedly called up to me, a world of compassion on their countenance; "this very day you will be set free!"

The phylacteries and the breakfast, however, things too material to be conveyed through the air and needing the permission of a brutal doorkeeper, were, to the deepest grief of my visitors, not delivered to me.

"He does not let me go up to you," called up Reb Johanan to me; "he has roughly pushed me aside, the *kelev*" [dog]. But you must have patience; it's the lot of the Jew to suffer. You'll soon be released, cost what it may; don't worry!"

After sending up to me no end of renewed sympathy in their parting looks, my three feeling friends left the yard, seeming to me three merciful angels of rescue by far nobler than the three angels who visited Abraham, and who, instead of bringing him

a meal as my angels had done for me, ate up his butter, his milk, and his calf.

About midday I went with my hope into another cell, in which I had the fortune of finding a bench. Here I learned that all the prisoners in the jail were about to be transported to the station-house of the third precinct for examination. At two o'clock new life went through the whole great police building. The inmates of all the numerous cells in all the stories of the house, people arrested, with and without passports, in the third precinct during the preceding night, were let out and counted; and the corridors resounded with yelling, swearing, and trampling. The tumult, however, soon subsided; the prisoners began to descend the stairs and pass out through the gate.

In the street we bent our steps toward Tatar Street, where the police station was situated. Our hearts bled, our heads sank, and our glances turned to the ground. The shame of being surrounded and driven like criminals by a cordon of growling and cursing policemen in broad daylight and through busy streets, where one can be easily seen by one's acquaintances, was insupportable. A convoyed enormous multitude of unwashed, dirty-looking, careworn, and beaten-up persons could not but attract the attention of the pedestrians, who, at the sight of us, stopped walking and stared at us open-mouthedly. Some of the pedestrians, non-Jews,

even indulged, at our expense, in mockeries, which hurt us deeply, though they were chiefly directed against our enormous number, to which we, individually, could, of necessity, contribute but very little. The policemen, in constant fear lest some of the immense column should lose themselves among the free walkers, were beside themselves with rage; while, on the other hand, some wary passers-by kept at a distance from the marching prisoners, fearful of being entangled and driven along with them.

XVII.

THE POLICE CHIEF PROPOSES, BUT MAMMON DISPOSES.

We soon reached the station-house, in front of which we found a vast crowd composed of the prisoners' relatives and friends. They made way for us, and we stepped into a large yard. An elderly gentleman, with an air of great importance, looked out of one of the windows of the building and surveyed the endless transport with a satisfied smile. It was, as I soon learned, the captain, whom our extraordinary number promised a rich harvest.

Here we were counted again, and this time not uselessly; for—many were missing, having, in an unguarded moment, mingled with the pedestrians and faced about. The prisoners, awaiting with heavy hearts the speedly decision of their fate, were looking fearfully toward the house. Reb Feitel, his little boy weeping at his side, was most dejected. Father and son had no idea that freedom was hovering about them. For the good-hearted sexton, Reb Shlome, had, as I subsequently learned, already during the morning service in the Claus told the well-to-do worshipers of the critical situation of the Vilkomir prisoners; and, by the opening of some pocketbooks in the synagogue in the morning, some eyes, in some mysterious way, closed at this police station

in the afternoon, so that Reb Feitel and his son could return home undisturbed and sure not to be unwelcome if they came again to Vilna next winter. The little Talmud students I did not see in the yard; at the monetary intervention of the director of Remailes Claus, they, as I later learned, had been already set free at noon, and were now making up for all they had missed in the *yeshivah*—the ferocious ox was now especially active—and in the houses of their charitable meals.

A door soon opened. Several Vilna-born prisoners were called by their names and stepped into the house with heads bowed down. But, as if the function of the police station were to make people happy, the Vilna young men, their papers in their hands, soon came out overjoyed and set out for their homes, their accompanying relatives and friends, who had done, that is, given all necessary for their liberation, helping them carry their heavy load of happiness.

Soon I was thrilled to hear also my name called. Having descried neither Reb Johanan nor any one of his family in the street, I, despite the former's assurance of my release, felt greatly disquieted. Reb Johanan, however, as I soon found out, was standing at the gate, awaiting longingly my coming out a free man. He had, through a mediator, taken all the steps necessary for my liberation. At first the matter would not go well at all; I, as the agent said,

did not belong to Vilna and was, besides, under suspicion on account of my having been stealing through the Temple courtyard late in the night; placed, however, by Reb Johanan upon a greater number of metallic wheels—coin—the matter finally did go well.

No examination, of course, awaited me this time. As I entered the office, the assistant of the captain, a shrewd-eyed and glib-tongued lad, sneered at me only a few times and called harshly to me:

"*Thy* luck that *thou* hast a passport."

Thus my passport brought me good luck for the third time in less than twenty-four hours. In a whirlwind of joy I dashed out into the street. The good-souled Reb Johanan rushed toward me, his countenance beaming with happiness. I thanked him, and he—apologized to me; and, overmastered by our emotion, we both spoke at the same time, hardly listening to each other.

* * *

This pathetic and laughable experience of mine with the Russian police is but a small part of the tragi-comedy that mysterious fate is playing on the little stage of my life. Alas! it plays our tragi-comedies so wonderfully, and when it finishes them, we cannot applaud it even once:

THE END.

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